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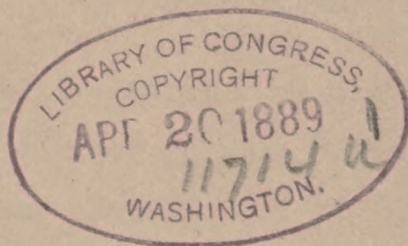
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J E R R Y

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NEW YORK
JOHN B. ALDEN, PUBLISHER

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JERRY.

CHAPTER I.

"JE-RUSALEM! What a narrow escape! I'm clean tuckered out, that policeman was within ten feet of me when I turned the first corner! 'Twas a lucky thought that struck me when I spied this old sugar hogshead, and I wasn't long in getting here.—There they come now!" and crouching, panting and trembling in fear of discovery, Jerry waited in terrible suspense, while a troop of boys and men, headed by a policeman, went running by, yelling: "Stop thief! Stop thief!" "Where is he?" "Which way?"

Not until their voices died in the distance did Jerry move a muscle: then cautiously and slowly he raised himself and peered out of his queer hiding-place.

Seeing the coast clear, he scrambled out of the hogs-head and hastened down the alley.

"Now I must make tracks for home. I won't venture to open this pocket-book 'till I'm in a safe place. Cracky! but I'm hungry, lucky for me that I had a crust this morning, or them fellers would have run me down soon: wonder if there's any money in it; mother and Linny shall have one good, square meal if there is, but if 'boss' is around, he'll rob me quicker 'n wink. O, dear, I wish I had a decent father anyway; if he was a sober, honest man, I'd be the happiest feller agoin', for I've got a mother and sister that can't be

beat—Glory Moses! there he goes now,—into a saloon of course. I'd like to know where he always gets money to buy whiskey; well, I hope he'll not come home and abuse mother and Linny—if he ever strikes her again, I'll have him arrested as sure as my name is Jerry."

As he mounted the rickety stairs which led to his mother's apartments, Jerry felt a very wrathful little heart beating under his patched vest; as he thought of the many wrongs of his poor, hard-working, patient mother, and his gentle, blind sister, so sweet-voiced and so uncomplaining.

He opened the door and found Linnet in her usual place—in a low rocker, with the baby on her knee.

"O, Jerry," she exclaimed, "I've been waiting for your step, I have such good news."

"Have you," he replied rather absently, for his hand grasped the pocket-book, and he was too eagerly searching the contents to care for anything short of an earthquake just then. As he opened the inner clasp he saw a shining silver dollar, and drew forth two bills, each two dollars in value.—"O, goody! ain't I glad!" and he began to dance a double shuffle.

"S-h, you'll waken the baby; listen and I'll go on."

"Fire away," said Jerry, not knowing or caring what his sister was talking about, and keeping his secret until his mother's return. He put the treasure into his bosom, lest his father should come and search him for a few pennies with which to buy rum.

Presently the door opened and the poor, tired mother came in. She had a smile and a kind word for them, for her children were all that gave any brightness to her weary, toilsome existence.

"I am afraid we shall have to go supperless to bed, dears," she said, "I could not collect the money owing me, and had my long walk for nothing. O, how refreshing a good cup of strong tea would be," she sighed, and her lips trembled as she looked on her hungry brood. The baby, hearing his mother's voice, set up a plaintive cry.

"Just wait, mother, you *shall* have your tea, I got some money to-day," and off ran Jerry like a shot. As he hurried along he soliloquized—"I don't want to tell mother 'til I've made some purchases. She'll think it's dishonest or something, and wait to hear if it's advertised for: or else she'll want to get me some clothes and send me to school; she's always worrying because I'm growing up a know-nothing. Humph! I've cut my eye-teeth, and know a heap more 'n half the school kids; besides, if I hadn't found the purse that other chap would have picked it up and had the benefit of the money. There wasn't any owner about, and it was half buried in mud: if I hadn't been looken for cigar stumps I never would have seen it. Wasn't that big feller madder 'n fury when I wouldn't give it up? and didn't I just run like a white-head? and then he just yelled 'Stop thief!' 'til in less 'n no time a whole gang was at my heels—a big 'Blue-coat' at the head.

"Now I'll take some of this money and set up in the shoe-blacken business; them fellows make lots of money, and Nick Johnson won't crow over me because he earns his money by the sweat of his brow."

Before entering the grocer's, Jerry cautiously took from the purse the silver piece and replaced the rest in his bosom.

" 'Twont do to let them see me with such a bank, or they'll holler for a policeman and have me in the lock-up."

He bought a loaf of bread, a half-pound of tea, a pound of butter, a small quantity of cheese, and last, but not least to him, a box of blacking and a brush, then started for home as proud and happy as any lord. On the way he chanced to see some sausages in a butcher's shop, and went in and with his remaining pennies bought a pound. He could not make his legs carry him as fast as his mind travelled in happy anticipation of the joy of his mother and Linny, and the delicious meal in store. As he neared home his heart sank, for he saw his father reeling along a few yards in advance, and he knew their joy would be turned to grief.

"Shoot the luck! that spoils everything. No use going home now, he's got the very devil in him when he's drunk,—he 'aint none too good when he's sober." And poor Jerry, remembering nothing but abuse, muttered over his disappointment as he retarded his steps.

The wretched man staggered from side to side, trying in vain to steady himself; then finally lost his balance and lay sprawling in the gutter. He uttered some fearful oaths and then lay quiet.

Jerry, utterly disgusted, approached him and stood for awhile contemplating his disgraceful fall. Then finding his father evidently satisfied to lie there, and remembering his tired mother who so badly needed refreshment, he hastened on.

He found the baby still wailing, and his mother trying to hush its hungry cry by walking the floor. She looked ready to faint with the exertion. Linnet was

trying to revive the fire by throwing some charcoal on the embers.

"There!" exclaimed Jerry as he burst into the room and threw his parcels upon the table. "Now Linny, take the baby while mother and me prepare a feast!"

"Bless the boy! *he* has been favored to-day, surely," cried his mother, while her eyes filled with grateful tears: and cutting from the loaf a crust, gave it to the babe, who eagerly siezed it, and immediately stilled its cries.

"*Jemimy!* I'm hungrier than a bear," said Jerry, as he flew around, filling the tea-kettle, putting the frying-pan on the stove, and unwrapping parcels. Four willing hands soon had supper under way, and the kettle sang merrily, while the savory sausage fairly made Jerry dance with glee, as the little round cakes sputtered and bubbled in their own fat. There was a faded and patched, though clean red cloth on the table, a few silver spoons and forks—relics of better days,—a few plain dishes—some cracked, and all bearing the marks of age, but everything as clean as soap and water could make it.

"All aboard," called Jerry, as his mother lifted the tea-pot from the stove, and he placed the chairs about the table. "All aboard, not a moment to lose,"—and taking his mother, with both arms about her waist, seated her in the easiest chair the house afforded. Then taking the baby brother from Linnet, seated him on the floor, while he led her to a seat. He then threw himself into his chair with a breath of deep-drawn satisfaction, and exclaimed boy-fashion,—“Now pitch in.”

"Patience, dear," was his mother's low-voiced

answer; and bowing her head, briefly and earnestly thanked the Father for still remembering their needs.

Oh, how delicious everything tasted, none but those in like circumstances can know.

"Now, my boy, I can have courage to go again to Mr. Scrimp. He *must* pay me: our rent is over-due, and Mr. Ford says we must leave if it is not paid by Saturday."

"How much is it?" asked Jerry.

"Four dollars. Mr. Scrimp owes me three, and I can earn the rest if I get the work promised me. However, we won't spoil this delicious meal by any worry over the morrow. 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' I have been comforted all day by the little lines that have been running through my mind."

Here the baby set up a cry and Jerry, at Linnet's request, put the little fellow in his sister's lap.

"What are the lines, dearie," asked she, turning to her mother, who repeated,

"Build a little fence of trust around to-day,
Fill the space with loving work and therein stay.
Look not through the sheltering bars upon to-morrow,
God will help you bear what comes, if joy or sorrow."

"How beautiful!" cried Linnet.

"Bully!" exclaimed Jerry, while his mother looked at him with mild reproach and said, "My son, do try to overcome your dreadful habit of using slang on all occasions. For one moment stop and think of the unfitness of such a word as that in reference to anything touching or pathetic."

"O, I always forget, I hear nothing else on the

street; but, I'll try, mammy, to please you and Linny. Now Lin'—go on with the piece of good news you've got to relate, then I'll occupy the floor with an exciting tale."

And Linnet began her story.

CHAPTER II.

"WELL, as I sat rocking Tiny Tim,"—this was what Linnet called her baby brother because of his delicate little frame,—“I was singing one of my original airs, when there came a rap at the door: I said come in, and then a voice—a man’s voice asked; ‘Is this the room that contains the sweet singer?’ I replied that I had been singing, and asked him to be seated. Then he asked if I would please go on said he was an Italian singing master, was passing under my window and heard a voice so like his dear, dead daughter’s, that he could not resist the temptation to enter and get acquainted with the owner of the voice; and would I not gratify him? I felt sorry for him, and sang ‘Sweet Angel’—your favorite, dearie,” glancing at her mother—“and when I finished, his voice seemed full of tears as he said,—‘Just the same, just the same. How old are you, my dear?’ I replied ‘fifteen,’ and again he said ‘Just the same—just the same.’”

“O, bother!” exclaimed impatient Jerry, “hurry up, Lin, and get to the kernel; there’s too much shell and too little meat.”

“I’m getting to the kernel as fast as I can—now listen. He said his daughter used to sing at evening entertainments for the fine families on the Avenue, and that when she died his wife’s heart broke, and she soon followed her to the far-off country where the angels sing, and how he was now all alone in the world, and would I not like to be trained to sing as

she had done and become a helper in taking care of my family, etc., etc."

"O!" I cried, "I would be so glad, so glad. I'll ask my mother—but—you see I am blind, would that make any difference? How could I study?"

"Ah, my dear child," he said, so sorrowfully, "I did not know, but that would make no difference. You could learn by ear, and I would teach you just to hear your charming voice, and think my own Peroi was near."

"But," I said, "my mother is so tender of me she would not let me go among strangers I fear, and how could I leave my baby brother?"

"Your mother could stay at home, for your voice will bring more than she can earn by sewing, my dear."

"So, dearest, he is coming to-morrow for your consent, and O, I shall be so happy. Don't say him nay, will you?" and the pleading voice was so full of music and pathos that the tears came to her mother's eyes as she replied,—

"I am glad that you can have the instruction, my darling, but I must see this Italian and learn something more before I say yes. I cannot bear to think of you going out from home to labor—even to sing."

"Now, for gracious' sake let me get in a word," and Jerry, no longer able to keep his secret, told his story, and produced the pocket-book.

When his mother perceived the initials on the lap of it, she changed color, and appeared startled: then for a moment sat buried in thought.

At this moment the door was burst open and the husband and father came stumbling into the room. So intense had been their interest in Jerry's narra-

tion they had not noticed his approach. He looked a very brute as his eyes caught sight of them seated around the table, apparently enjoying a comfortable meal.

He growled out, "So you can get victuals enough when I'm not here to help eat, can you? I was told there was no money, and nothing in the house to eat. So you'll lie to me, will you, you lazy bones, only fit to sing to the brat all day: I'll teach you!" and he dealt poor Linnet a stunning blow. She tried to dodge his hand, but not seeing from which way it came, she received the full force of it, and fell to the floor with the baby in her arms.

The mother and brother ran to the rescue, but too late to save them. The little one's head struck on the edge of the stove. He uttered a sharp cry of pain and then lay still, his little pinched face turning ashy pale.

The unhappy wife with the strength of desperation seized the arm uplifted for another blow, and threw her husband from his victim. She stooped and lifted the child, hastily laying it in the cradle, though with motherly tenderness, then hastened to the assistance of her sightless darling. With a sob she cried, "Are you hurt, my Linnet? Oh, God! he has killed her, killed my little comforter!" Raising the slender form, she held it close to her bursting heart; raining the while tears and kisses upon lips, cheek and brow. "Oh, Jerry my boy, what shall we do? Has he killed them both? Heaven have mercy on his soul. Bring water, quick, my boy, it may be only a faint." Quickly Jerry obeyed her bidding.

Dashing some drops on the pallid face, she soon

saw a flutter and quiver about the lips—and the blue eyes opened and stared vacantly as she asked:—

“What is it mother?” The poor woman could make no reply for the great sob of revulsive feeling that almost choked her. Motioning Jerry to bring a pillow, she laid her darling down with infinite tenderness and went to the babe, who lay white and still, though softly breathing. Seeing no sign of injury save a little blue mark near the temple, the relieved woman sank exhausted into a chair.

The brutal father, seeing the ruin he had wrought, looked on in a dazed sort of a way, partially brought to his senses after expending his fury.

Seeing his wife's gaze riveted upon him in sorrowful reproach, he uttered a curse and staggered to the door.

“Thomas,” she said, “come back; you want food; we are ready to share with you so long as we have it.” Go to him and touch him—*she could not*. He had long since forfeited her love and respect. She had only pity left for the man who had won her girlish heart but to break it—the man who, against her parents' wishes, had beguiled her from her happy home and persuaded her to marry him clandestinely. She felt that she was not blameless and was reaping the bitter fruit of disobedience to her parents' wishes and just objections to the handsome stranger.

But where was Jerry all this while? True to his word, he had gone in search of a policeman to arrest his cruel father! He was breathless with excitement, indignation and outraged feelings as he thought of the cowardly attack on his helpless sister and innocent brother. He kept up his pace for several blocks and

was about to take a new street, when he saw a burley blue-coat with his gleaming star issue from the very saloon he had seen his father enter!

He stood stock still; amazed at himself and disgusted with this minion of the law. What! ask this fellow, who set no better example of self-denial than his father, to drag him—his father—to prison? His mother and Linny dragged into court? “And perhaps he will be hung for murder!—I can’t do it, he deserves to be sent to jail, but I—I won’t help him to get there.”

Slowly retracing his steps, he once more entered his miserable home to find his mother with the babe on her lap, vainly trying through her tears to see how to adjust the clean little gown to the already stiffening baby form;—for her child was dead.

Linnet sat beside her mother uttering words of condolence, her own tears fast dropping on the little hand she lovingly stroked and caressed. She said, chokingly, “My occupation’s gone, mother.”

“Yes, dear,—thank God he suffered no pain; but oh, that his father’s soul should be so steeped in crime.”

“Mother,” Jerry asked in an awe-struck voice, “is baby brother dead?”

“I have only one son now,” she said gently, and drew him to her and kissed him. Jerry put his arm around her neck, and returned the caress, then gazed long and tearfully on the white-robed figure. He never forgot that sacred caress—that solemn scene.

His sister went to him and softly whispered a few words in his ear. He left the room and soon returned with a kind, neighborly Scotch woman, who offered

her sympathy and assistance, which was gratefully accepted.

The guilty father had eaten his supper hastily and left the house immediately after. They saw no more of him until the following day, when he came home sober—a rare condition nowadays. He entered just as the little pine coffin was being carried out, followed by a few kind neighbors, his wife and Jerry.

Linnet sat alone; her hands clasped upon her knee, the tears falling silently. She had loved the babe with a mother's devotion, and now her arms were empty. She heard her father's footfall, and knew he was himself once more. She did not speak, but waited for him to question.

He sat for a while with his face buried in his hands. He could not meet the gaze of his wife's reproachful eyes, he would question Linnet—gentle, patient, sweet-voiced Linnet, who never in her life gave him one reproachful word. "Child," he asked, after an impressive silence of many minutes, "what ailed your brother? Keep nothing back—I will know all."

She hesitated. "Speak, girl, I was a fiend yesterday, did I kill the boy?" Gently she replied, for his trembling voice called for pity, "You did not mean to hurt him, father, but he struck his head on the edge of the stove, and—while we thought him asleep, he had gone to join the angels."

Briefly she told the sad story; she shrank from giving him pain. "Don't cry, father, he is happy now and he suffered no pain."

Her words brought only stinging remorse; and the unhappy man shook from head to foot with tearless

sobs. He sat thus for an hour, then rousing himself, went to the door and passed out.

Two days later the morning papers chronicled the following: "The body of a drowned man was found in the river yesterday morning by two fishermen. It was taken to the morgue and afterward identified by a lad claiming to be his son. The boy told a pitiful tale. The old, old story of rum, poverty, crime and suicide."

After these harrowing scenes, Linnet became so melancholy, that her mother finally consented to the singing master, and the lessons began. The young girl threw her whole heart and soul into the work, and teacher and mother marveled at the rapid progress she had made, and at the depth and purity of her voice: "So rich and so rare," the Italian would exclaim, and clap his hands in ecstasy. Her voice, her face, with its spiritual beauty, her simplicity of manner, all combined to make her nearer an angel than a mortal.

Jerry came home after his first day as professional boot-black, and threw into his mother's lap five nickels.

"There! I call that a good beginning, a deal better than picking cigar stumps, at five cents a hundred—but that business served me a good turn, for I will never smoke a cigarette so long as I live."

"God help you, dear boy, in all such good resolves," replied his mother.

"Now, mother," he continued, "when Linny gets started, you shall fold your hands and stay at home, we will be the bread-winners."

"Idleness never brings happiness, my lad, I must not have much time for thinking. It is better not."

After two weeks' study, Linnet was ready to make her *debut*; in other words, she had learned a number of charming songs, which her teacher accompanied on the harp. He did not interfere with her natural expression, which he thought almost angelic in her rendering, but he taught her how to reserve her breath, and how to control her voice to the best advantage. She was so impatient to be helping her mother, and so lost without her little charge, that she could scarce restrain her anxiety. She was as excited and delighted as any Fifth Avenue belle on the eve of her first ball. The Italian had secured an engagement for her to sing at one of the "fine houses" on the Avenue, at which there was to be a reception. Very lovely Linnet looked in her simple white muslin—the gift of the singing master.

It had been worn on a similar occasion by his daughter, and the likeness, when he gazed upon Linnet's features, brought the tears to his eyes. Not that they had much in common, their complexions were unlike—Linnet's being fair, while the Italian girl's was dark. Linnet's eyes were like the doves, soft and blue, while Peroi's were dark and deep: but there was the same innocent, trusting look on the face of each.

Her mother and Jerry looked at her with faces that seemed to say,—“She only lacks wings to make her a very angel.”

“Now, my precious one, don't overdo,” and with motherly solicitude she pinned the cloak and hood closer about the dear form. Giving her mother and

Jerry a parting kiss, Linnet started with her new friend for "Fairy-land."

The mother sat down and cried. Jerry said—"Good bye; I'm going to keep guard, mother, so don't worry." And away he ran—with his mother's "God bless you," ringing in his ears.

CHAPTER III.

MRS. STUBLETON dried her tears and sat down to her mending. Nine—ten—eleven o'clock struck from the old-fashioned clock on the mantel shelf, and she began to grow nervous and anxious. At last their steps and voices were heard on the stairs, and she hastened to give them a welcome home.

"O mother!" cried Linnet as she entered the room, her face fairly illuminated, "it was paradise! the air so pure and fragrant, the music so divine, and the rustle of silken robes, the hum of low voices, all so different from the sounds we live in; I was in heaven, and the only thing lacking was not having you to enjoy it with me. And every one was so kind to me. A young lady—one of the daughters—came and sat by me and described some of the beautiful dresses to me. O mother, how I did long for sight. Then when we had refreshments, she put her arm around me and led me out to the dining-room and seated me beside my kind friend here, and what *do* you think I did, dearie? Why, I just made a goose of myself and *cried*! I couldn't help it—I felt so happy, and yet I so longed for you and Jerry: and then when I cried what happened? Why this silly brother"—here she patted Jerry affectionately—"came in to see what was the matter and tried to have me come home. Well, I had to explain, and then they made Jerry stay and have some of the delicious cake and ice cream.——"

"Yes," chimed in Jerry "and that wasn't all. They had coffee and sandwiches, and fruits and Oh, Jeminy! *everything* good! I just eat 'til I was ready to burst!"

"O, you dreadful boy," exclaimed the mother and sister in a disgusted tone. "What must they have thought of you?"

"Guess they thought I was half starved, and they didn't come wide of the mark."

"Yes, and mother he was actually going to wrap some cake in his handkerchief and bring it to you." Here Jerry drew forth his hand from his pocket and unfolding a soiled, coarse handkerchief, passed it over to his mother, for it contained a piece of angel's food!

His mother could not scold, for it showed his love and thoughtfulness for her, and she said:

"Bless my boy for his good will, but next time do not impose on the hospitality of any one."

Linnet, however, felt greatly shocked, and quite severely reproved her brother for "disgracing her by such abominable manners."

"Well, let it pass this time children: our good friend here has not had a moment in which to tell me whether or no success crowned his efforts."

"Ah, madam, your daughter charmed them all; and they were loud in their applause. She has a great future ahead of her; for she has a rare gift. I must say good night, and I will come to-morrow and bring the newspaper that you may see for yourself," and bowing politely the Italian took his leave. Then Linnet proudly displayed five dollars, her share of gain for the part she took in the entertainment.

She gave it to her mother as she said: "We will

soon get out of this low neighborhood, dearie. It is not, and never can be congenial to us."

"That's the talk, sis. I made a dollar to-day, and we'll soon have a house on the Avenue at this rate," laughingly exclaimed Jerry.

"To bed, to bed," urged the weary mother. And soon the lights were out, and quiet reigned. Jerry was snoring before his head had fairly settled into the pillow. Mrs. Stubleton soon slept lightly, for tired nature claimed a respite; but Linnet—every nerve in her body was in a quiver of excitement. She lay with her sightless eyes wide open, her mind in a whirl, revolving the scenes of the evening, and building castles for the future.

Alas! for human hopes and plans. Two days later Linnet was in a delirium of fever. Her delicate organization could not brook exposure and excitement and now everything would depend upon careful nursing and proper nourishment. Jerry must indeed prove himself the bread-winner for the family. Nor did he flinch: early and late he exerted himself in behalf of mother and sister.

He came home at times almost exhausted, but his mother's kindly words would give him new courage, and seeing how she labored to keep up cheerfully for his sake, for Linnet was not conscious of passing events, he likewise put self aside and the two became one in purpose,—to keep Linnet from the grim Reaper.

Their friend, the Italian, was indeed the friend in need, and every day some token of his interest came to them in fruits, or dainties for the invalid, or substantials for the well ones. Thus Mrs. Stubleton ever found something to call forth her gratitude.

Midst all her labors she never failed in reading her chapter from God's book before retiring. She read aloud to Linnet and Jerry,—her husband had never spent his evenings at home, but invariably scoffed at all religious devotions when present. It was her greatest comfort during these years of sore trial, and she felt that but for these very trials she would never have sought this Refuge.

So God in His infinite love must discipline his erring children, and bring them back to their true and only source of genuine happiness; where under the shadow of His wing they may rest apart from the ills of mortal life. Where, sure of future peace, they can patiently abide through this little span of life.

Mrs. Stubleton never left the bedside of her darling. The kind physician whom their friend had sent them, at first looked very grave, and gave them little hope of Linnet's recovery. But as the days wore on, he began to be more favorable in his opinions, and became greatly interested in the blind girl who sang such ravishing strains, and talked so incessantly of "making a home for dearie," and how Jerry should be educated; and then she would imagine her baby brother in her arms, and talk sweet baby nonsense, or sing soft soothing lullabies. Again, she would spring from her bed and try to avert an imaginary blow from the hand of her father. All this in her delirium spoke volumes to the young physician, and he redoubled his efforts and gave much time to the case. Then came the crisis of the disease.

He lingered long by her bedside, and then with minute directions to her mother, the doctor left, saying "he would call early in the morning."

CHAPTER IV.

WHOEVER has sat by the couch of sickness waiting and counting the moments that shall bring either hope or despair, can understand the agonizing suspense through which Linnet's mother had passed the long hours of that never-to-be-forgotten night. But morning came at last, and with the rising sun came new-born Hope, flooding all the humble dwelling with its joyous resurrection. Linnet lived: Linnet smiled in her mother's face and asked for "a good-morning kiss," and her mother's face lighted as one transfigured when she complied. What was want, or poverty, or pain, now since her singing bird was restored to her. Jerry too, was up with the dawn, and was so elated 'twas all his mother could do to keep him from giving a hip-hip-hurrah! so little did he realize the necessity of perfect quiet, and the dire effect that might come of any excitement to his sister in her prostrate condition. He tried to tip-toe around as he prepared the morning meal, for he insisted upon doing whatever would relieve his mother—so worn with watching that her hollow eyes and pale cheeks made him almost cry to look at her, but the unusual step made him stumble more awkwardly than had he walked naturally. He was tip-toeing across the floor with a pail of water, and losing his balance fell forward. Struggling to regain his perpendicular, he let go the handle, and finally fell sprawling in the noisiest manner possible. He got up

feeling very angry at something, he knew not what, and gave the pail a kick which made poor Linnet start up wildly and exclaim "O, father, don't! don't!" Instantly Jerry felt shame and remorse for his quick temper and hastened out of doors to cool off, while his mother took Linnet in her arms and softly soothed her to repose.

When Jerry re-entered the room, he found his sister quietly sleeping; and his mother ready to sit down to her toast and coffee. He looked at her, well knowing the reproach that was in store for him, for Jerry's besetting sin was his quick temper: and he knew how much anxiety it caused his gentle mother and sister. Toward them he was ever kind and patient; but he had inherited this fault from his father and his companions of the street had necessarily been of a low order, so that the poor boy was to be pitied more than censured. His mother realized this, yet ever strove to elevate his tendencies, and point out the bitter results sure to follow an ungoverned temper. Jerry did try continually to overcome this failing, and he felt at times that he was making great headway, then some trifle would completely upset everything and the poor lad would lay his head in his mother's lap and cry, "Its no use, mother, I can't drive out what is born in me."

Then she would very tenderly talk and reason until he was again full of hope and good resolves. None knew how earnestly the mother prayed for her darling boy; but God heard, and in His own time and way was working out Jerry's salvation.

One day, when Linnet was able to sit up and even beguile the time by singing some of her favorite airs while her mother sat by with her sewing, a quick step

sounded on the stairs, and immediately the door was thrown open and Jerry—his face covered with blood, his eyes wild and bloodshot, fell rather than ran into the room. A pallor as of death overspread his mother's face; terrible fears chased each other with lightning rapidity through her brain.

She hastened to him crying: "What have you done? Speak my son! Oh, God!—Are you hurt?" for Jerry crouched at her feet and clutched at her dress trying to hide his face.

"O mother! save me from myself! I think I have killed him, but he would not let me alone and followed me with his taunting, until I turned and struck him with my 'Jack,' then he became a devil too, and we fought like wild beasts. I got him down and pounded him until he lay still; then I felt such a reaction, and O, mother! I am afraid I carry the mark of Cain. I want to die, I want to die!"

At this moment a loud rap was heard at the door, and without invitation a policeman entered.

"Young man," he said, "I'll take care of you; I was just in time to see you run from your victim; I sent for the patrol and now I'll trouble you to jump in and we'll be off to headquarters."

Jerry made no further outcry: he knew this would come, but he wanted first to tell his mother: she would understand it all; for the "he" alluded to, was an old-time enemy, and one whom he and his mother had often studied how to avoid—a neighbor's boy with whom Jerry would not associate because of his low habits. This enraged the fellow and he continually dogged Jerry's steps and twitted him of being the "son of a drunkard," "a loafer's child," "a

proud beggar," etc., etc., all of which Jerry had borne over and over again, but to-day, he was feeling hungry, and tired, and half sick, and his earnings had fallen far short of his expectations: he was on his way home when his tormentor came up behind and said, "Well, you stagger as bad as your daddy used to do—been in to Duffy's, eh?"—Duffy's being a low brothel in the vicinity. Jerry turned and replied: "If you was a decent fellow, I'd lay you out; but you ain't fit to soil my hands on." With that the other rushed upon him and curling his foot around Jerry's, tried to throw him: then Jerry was in for it, and struck his assailant. It was in a by-street and would have been unwitnessed had not a blue-coat been off his beat to whet his thirst.

All Mrs. Stubleton's tears and prayers for her boy were unavailing. Jerry rose from his humble attitude as soon as he caught sight of the policeman, and in a manly voice said: "Mother, its all right for me to go, but who will care for you and Linny? that's all that worries me. Don't fret, Linny's friend won't let you suffer, and—I—don't—want—to—live—under the same roof with you two if he—if I—am guilty."

His mother pressed him to her heart and whispered, "Keep up your courage, my boy, it may not be so bad as you think: we know where to turn for help in our darkest hours. God be with you," and she kissed his haggard face, as she wiped with a moist cloth the blood stains away. He had received a cut over the eye, though nothing serious.

When he had been hustled off by the policeman, Mrs. Stubleton's whole attention was given to Linnet, who had fainted dead away. And when brought back

to consciousness her mother would not allow her to talk on the subject, but putting aside her own fears, endeavored to cheer and console the invalid, and by so doing kept herself in a more hopeful state of mind.

When night approached, however, their love and anxiety for Jerry kept them silent and depressed. How they missed his cheerful, willing ways of assisting in little household duties. He was never away from home evenings and was wont to beguile their loneliness by reciting bits of news, or relating funny little incidents which occurred through the day. Poor boy! well they knew how he was upbraiding the luck that had brought him such misfortune, and yet, as he learned in after years, this was a needful lesson for him to learn.

When Mrs. Stubleton had read her Bible chapter to Linnet, and had lovingly soothed away her excitement, she was rewarded by seeing her fall into a quiet sleep: then, falling on her knees, she poured forth her full heart in prayer. Silently dropped her tears, and as silently God's pitying angel bore her heart-broken prayers and laid them at the feet of the merciful Father, who sent His messenger Hope to lull her to rest.

The morrow brought their Italian friend, who, when he learned of their grief, immediately started off in search of news, and to render all assistance possible to poor Jerry.

CHAPTER V.

JERRY and his victim were borne away together in the patrol wagon; his enemy to the hospital, he to the station. His heart-ache was not for the boy lying so pale and still at his feet: he could not feel any great pity for the coward who had for years been to him a stumbling block—making him forget time and again his dear mother's wise counsels. He only thought of her and Linny if he should prove to be a murderer.

Meantime, the policeman, having seen Jerry's mother and sister, had taken in their surroundings and manner and felt convinced that they were not common poor, but refined gentlefolk; and was led to question Jerry. He was soon enlisted on the defendant's side; for Jerry's frank face and unhesitating manner of telling his story convinced him of its truth; while the unconscious boy's every appearance indicated the young ruffian: he was dirty and ragged, and his features were coarse and hard.

"Poor boy," at length said Jerry, "he is to be pitied, for his mother drinks and abuses him, and his father ran away years ago, I am told."

"Well, he's better dead than alive, I reckon, but I'd rather you hadn't finished him," replied Jerry's new friend.

"There! look!" cried Jerry, "he moved, he's coming to, praise God!" and then he stooped and lifted

the boy's head on his knee and fanned him with his hat.

"Well, you must get out of here," said the policeman, "and we must hurry him to the hos, and the doctor. Here, John, take charge of this youngster, don't be hard on him, he's in hard luck," and with that he handed Jerry over to a fellow officer of the law.

"Thank you," was Jerry's grateful response: and with a heart somewhat lightened, he willingly went along with the blue-coat into the station.

Jerry spent a sleepless night. He tried to pray, but the words stuck in his throat: he felt unworthy to ask favors of God, and believed he ought to suffer uncomplainingly: then Linny's angelic face would look so reprovingly, and his mother's sad eyes look so reproachfully, that he would cover his face with his hands and cry: "O Lord, help me to get out of this, and I *will* try harder than ever to get this temper out of me." Did God turn away from so sincere a prayer? No indeed, in His own way the answer would surely come.

When Jerry was led to the prisoner's box to answer to the charge of "assault with intent to kill," his face looked drawn and old; his big brown eyes, usually so full of humor, were hollow and sunken, his rosy face, haggard and pale. His straightforward story won the sympathies of the court, but all unknown to Jerry, there was one listener ready to give more than sympathy: the sentence, "imprisonment to await further testimony," meant privation and wasting anxiety to mother and Linnet, and Jerry's heart sank within him. There was no one to give him bail, and it might be

weeks before Jimmy McGinnis could appear, even if he lived.

Jerry's legs would support him no longer, and his fasting and anxiety caused him to lose all his assumed courage and he fell in a swoon.

When he revived, his eyes opened on familiar scenes; the little clock on the mantel shelf with its picture of happy sheep, that had for years been grazing in green pastures, ticked merrily away the time; then his eyes wandered to the window—yes, there stood the old rush-bottomed chair, and there was his own blessed mother bending above him, and Dr. Young—"Linny's Doctor" he had called him: what did it all mean? Ah, yes, he had awakened from a horrible nightmare; now he remembered it all; and looking at the faces bending over him, he sprang up and cried, "O, what a frightful dream!" then seeing the Italian, he looked for Linny; she too, was hovering near him; how pale and how sad everybody looked; was it after all no dream but stern reality? At last his faculties seemed to recover their normal condition; and Jerry rose up manfully and said, with a deep sigh: "I remember it all now,—but he is not dead, mother, I saw him move, and I am here, you see, to go to work again, so don't look so worried. But,—I don't know how I got home, who can tell me?" Then his mother explained how their dear, good friend had given bail, that he might come home, and how he had fainted in the court room.

"Humph! I thought I had more sand," was Jerry's laconic reply.

Then by tacit consent the subject was changed, and

the doctor and teacher took their departure, leaving the trio to their happy reunion.

Jerry resumed his work a sadder and a wiser boy; and during the weeks in which his assailant lay between life and death, he did a great deal of sober self-study, and resolved to master himself at whatever cost to his pride. He came in contact with many pugilistic fellows who were on his beat, and it required almost superhuman effort to keep his tongue and his fists from running away with his resolves.

This was a part of his hard lesson: and away across the city lay the boy who had brought him this discipline, learning *his* lesson. A kind, motherly, Christian nurse had him in charge, and little by little she had drawn from him his life history. She pitied the homely, forlorn, homeless little wretch, and began her labor of reviving in him some spirit of humanity and manliness. Slowly but surely kindness did its work, and softened his hitherto hardened heart.

Jerry had spent one of his hard-earned pennies each day in buying a paper to see if anything was said about his case; and eagerly he and his mother scanned its columns. He was overjoyed as well as his dear ones to see at last that "the boy who was so cruelly beaten by a young ruffian with a boot-rest, was on the way to recovery."

One day on entering his home, Jerry found a message desiring him to "come at once to the hospital," giving directions how to get there. He was greatly puzzled, but started as soon as he ate his cold lunch.

When he arrived he was ushered into ward No. 9, where were the convalescents; a woman of middle age

came forward and in a sweet voice asked: "Is this Jerry?"

"That's my name, ma'am," Jerry replied, wondering greatly.

"Well, come this way, dear," and then Jerry stood face to face with what was once ragged, dirty, wicked-looking Jimmy McGinnis! What a transformation! Jerry could hardly credit his senses, until Jimmy held out his hand and said; "Jerry, don't look like that, I'm not a ghost, but I'm goin' to be yer friend if yer'll let me; I ain't the same boy as come here four weeks ago; I've learned a heap I never knew before, and now I want to shake, and beg yer pardon."

"All right, Jimmy," heartily exclaimed Jerry, while the tears stood in the eyes of all three,—“I never meant to strike you such ugly blows, and I've been sorry enough. Now what can I do to prove it? Can I send you something good to eat?” That's usually as near complete happiness as a boy gets in this world, especially a boy in Jerry's circumstances.

"Well, that's a good offer, but I guess you've use fer all yer spare chink, and they treat me well enough here, a deal better 'n I deserve," Jimmy replied.

"I'll tell you what you *can* do, my lad," said the nurse. "Jimmy's mother has not yet been allowed to see him, for reasons perhaps you understand; but now he is strong enough to bear it, I want you to take a note to his mother, bidding her come to-morrow."

"Yes'um," meekly assented Jerry, for well he knew it was bearding the lion in its den, to face this irate woman who had threatened more than once to "murder the young blackguard if she iver could set hands on 'im fer tryin' to kill her blessid bye."

Jimmy did not look very radiant at the prospective visit, but he had promised his nurse to try and bear more patiently with his abusive mother, and see if, by manly conduct, he could not improve their manner of living. She had many misgivings, but she would not allow Jimmy to think for a moment that she doubted his ability and his good resolves. She well knew the herculean task that lay before him, but she faltered not in her determination to save this soul, if God would give her the power to uphold and encourage him until he could stand alone. No less than the angels would this good woman rejoice over one repentant sinner. *One?* Ah, there is seldom one comes alone, for every human life is so closely interwoven with some other life that its influence for good or evil is wide-spreading. How necessary for us to keep this thought in mind when tempted to do wrong. We are each a brick or a stone in the great temple of God's building, and if we become loose and fall from the place He has designed for us, the structure becomes imperfect, and we must answer for the consequences. What a grave thought, my readers.

In spite of his disagreeable errand, Jerry's feet seemed to tread on air as he left the hospital; his heart was full of sunshine; a great weight seemed lifted from his mind, and he whistled so merrily, and looked so happy that his presence seemed to invite customers, for he never did such a thriving business in all his life before.

"I'll go home before I go to the de—*wh-e-w!*" and such a whistle as stopped that sentence made the little sparrows scatter hither and thither. Then Jerry laughed long and loud, he couldn't help it, he felt so light-hearted.

He found his mother and sister waiting with some anxiety his return from the hospital. As soon as his beaming face showed itself in the doorway they turned, and both uttered an exclamation of surprise. "What is it, my laddie, your eyes shine like stars, and your bright face tells me you have good news," said his mother.

"Ah, I knew it before I heard the door," said his sister; "I know Jerry's moods by his step, so you see I have one advantage over you, dearie," as she laughingly turned to her parent.

Jerry's first impulse was to go to his mother and give her a resounding kiss, and then repeat the operation on his sister: then he tossed up a handful of dimes, letting them come down and rattle all over the floor, after which he turned a somersault, and then stood up and looked from one to the other of his astonished relatives.

"Jerry! are you daft?" cried his sister.

"Do tell us what it is," exclaimed his mother.

"He's a going to get well, and we're friends; this is the jolliest day of my life, *hurrah!*" and up went his hat. Of course his mother and Linnet cried,—women are such enigmas, they weep for joy, they weep for grief. God understands it, though Jerry did not. Then when he could calm himself a bit, he told them all about his visit to Jimmy. "Now comes the tug of war," he said as he crept around on his hands and knees for his scattered silver. "I'm off to the dragon."

"No matter what she says to you, dear, be respectful, and hold fast to your unruly member; 'He that

ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city,'” called his mother after him.

“By George! I begin to believe there is some truth in that. Don’t think I’ll ever be a general in that line though.” And he sauntered with a very different step from that which carried him home, toward the tumble-down rookery where lived “old Mother McGinnis,” as the neighborhood were wont to designate her.

CHAPTER VI.

JERRY had got within a few feet of the "dragon's den," as he called it, when the door opened and before he could guess what was coming the old hag clutched him around the throat and held him with such a grip that Jerry's eyes fairly bulged from their sockets.

"Lord help me," was his inward ejaculation, "she's drunk, and got the strength of a tiger, I'm in for a struggle to the death if no one comes to help me."

There was no shadow of relenting in the face that Jerry looked into, as these words were howled at him:—"You sneakin' little upstart! you robbed me of me darlint Jimmy, the pride of me life; and now I'll be aven wid ye, I'll teach ye how to trate yer betters, ye dirty beggar." And she shook him remorselessly.

Jerry was getting dizzy, and the world began to grow dark all of a sudden; he thought he was dying, and resolved to make a desperate attempt to shake off this Fury. He grasped both her arms with his hands, and swinging his feet from the ground wound his legs about her calves in such a way as to unbalance her, and she fell to the ground with Jerry on top of her: her head struck the sidewalk and stunned her for a moment, so that she relaxed her terrible grip and Jerry sprang to his feet. "O, Lord! I hope to die if I meant to do anything wicked, but I couldn't help it."

He stood looking at the prostrate form, not know-

ing what to do. Just then a young girl issued from an adjoining house and said to Jerry, "Well, youngster, you're in a pretty pickle, ain't you? I saw the whole fracas, and if you hadn't throwed her, I was comin' to help you, for she's worse than a tiger cat when she's in liquor. Take hold and I'll help you drag the old cat into her den."

Jerry looked at this girl with a fascinated stare. She was about fourteen years of age, well formed, with flaxen hair and sparkling blue eyes; neatly, though coarsely attired, and having an air of easy grace and freedom. "Well," she said, "did she paralyze you, or are you deaf?" seeing he made no move toward assisting her.

"Thank you," Jerry at length found voice to say, and he took the woman by the shoulders, while his rescuer lifted her feet, and they bore her to her hovel, a dirty straw pallet was the only bed the room contained, and on this they laid her, while the girl ran home to fetch a bottle of camphor which her invalid grandmother always kept at hand. She soon returned, and bathing the woman's face, and applying some to her nostrils, soon saw signs of recovery.

The irate creature was quite subdued by the blow, and looking at Jerry, said, "Well, ye wouldn't have escaped if some 'un hadn't been coward enough to strike me in the back, now be off wid ye."

"Here's a note for you Mrs. McGinnis, from Jimmy," said Jerry, not approaching too near.

"From me blessed bye, is it, and sure, why didn't ye giv it to me afore?" Jerry did not dare say she wouldn't let him, but stood irresolutely.

"Read it, Mag," she said, handing it to the young

girl, "I can't." When she learned its import, she seemed really touched and said, "Poor Jimmy, I hain't allus been a good mother to ye, but times is hard and work is scarce, and the drink drowns me worries."

"If I can help you any, I will," said Mag, "but I must go to Granny now," and she motioned Jerry to come too. He readily obeyed. When they got outside the door she said, "Look here, she can't have her drink to-night, and maybe she won't have money to buy any more in the morning, so Jimmy shall see her sober once more."

"Did you dare do that?" laughed Jerry, as she hid under her apron a bottle containing some of the miserable stuff labeled "whiskey."

"Yes, for Jimmy's sake; him and me are good friends, and he's a good boy when she lets this alone: I don't blame him fer his devilment when she beats and abuses him; I almost wish she hadn't come to," said Mag, as they walked on side by side.

"That would be tough on me," Jerry replied, "though I'm sure I have no love for her."

"I know your face, but I don't know your name," Mag continued, looking admiringly into Jerry's brown eyes. He blushed at her scrutiny, but replied frankly, "My name is Jerry Stubleton; I live on the next corner with my mother and sister."

"And I live here with my granny, and my aunt. I stay home and take care of the house, while my aunt goes out to sew,—good-bye, Jerry," and with that she disappeared within the door.

"She's a pretty girl, and she's got a sweet voice," was Jerry's comment as he slowly went toward his

home. When he entered, his sister asked, "what had kept him so long, and how he found the old lady."

"Well, if I haven't had an exciting time! Mother, that old hag came within an ace of making me an angel, though I felt more like a devil when she gripped me with such a death clutch."

"What *do* you mean, Jerry, did she really attack you?" asked his mother.

"Indade and she did, be jabers! I only saved myself by felling her to the earth!" and he related his experience.

"Poor wretch; I wonder if we can do anything for her, I don't wonder at Jimmy's vicious disposition. It is bad enough for a father to drink, but for a mother to set such an example, it is fearful!" mused Mrs. Stubleton.

"Well, mother, you think we are poor, but you'd think this a palace beside that shebang. No curtains at the windows, no bed, a rickety old table, two boxes for chairs, and dirt and dust everywhere. By George! I'd run away if I was in Jim's place. I'll always feel sorry for him now," and Jerry fell to thinking if there was not something he could do to brighten Jimmy's life.

He sat for a long time in silence; then he brought down his fist, making the dishes rattle on the table his mother was spreading for supper, "I'll do it; I'll buy him a brush and blacken, and put him to work. Mother can't you loan Mrs. McGinnis a clean dress to go to the hospital? She's so ragged and dirty, and Jimmy is as clean and tidy as a wash-board. He'd feel so ashamed of her."

"I might go over and see Mrs. McGinnis; if she's

sober I might be able to make some impression by my good intentions. Will you stay with Linny? and I will go after supper and carry her some bread and tea."

"That's the ticket, I'll wash dishes so's to lose no time. And say, mother, ask her if she knows the way to the hospital, and,—I wonder if she's a cent to pay car fare."

"If she has any money," chimed Linny, "it will go for *warfare* instead of car fare, you can rely upon that."

"Yes, I fear so; well, we'll see what is to be done when I see her," said Mrs. Stubleton.

CHAPTER VII.

WITH a nervous heart-beat Mrs. Stubleton rapped at the Widow McGinnis' door. No reply; she rapped again somewhat louder, but no response, then she tried the door; finding it unbolted she opened it and peered in. Upon the straw pallet, in a deep sleep lay the besotted creature. Mrs. Stubleton looked with disgust mingled with pity; she knew from sad experience that it would be useless to try to rouse her for any reasonable talk, so she set down the toast and tea, and turning up her dress pinned it in the back and went to work to tidy up the desolate and filthy room. The fire was out and the wood likewise,—no sign of fuel anywhere, no sign of provision or clothing: abject poverty was written everywhere.

Mrs. Stubleton knocked at a door leading to another apartment, and a slatternly woman made her appearance. "Can you tell me where to go for water, and will you loan me a broom?" she inquired.

"You'll find a cistern in the back yard, and ye can take this broom, but I don't loan to *her*, fer she ain't the kind as returns what she borrows," replied the neighbor.

Going to the back yard Mrs. Stubleton found the cistern and beside it a wooden pail; she also picked up some bits of coke that lay scattered around, and with this she returned to the room. She went to her own home and procured some matches and kindling, for as she said to Linnet "the dirt could never be

removed without hot water and soap,"—they got of an old man soft soap, because it was cheaper, and went further. She also took some scrubbing cloths, and thus armed went vigorously to work. She washed the windows, the woodwork, and lastly the floor. Then when this was done she returned the broom to its owner with many thanks: the latter seemed inclined to be communicative, and volunteered the opinion that she, Mrs. Stubleton, was wasting her time, as McGinnis would only abuse her for her pains.

Mrs. Stubleton, being a woman who kept her own counsel, only smiled a reply, and then sat down to rest and wait, meantime closely watching the disgusting heap on the floor. After an hour or two a grunt, then a curse issued from the woman's lips, and she rolled over facing Mrs. Stubleton: the latter arose and coming forward said, "Well, neighbor, I've brought you a sup of tea and toast. You must get ready for your visit to Jimmy early in the morning, and I have come to help you."

"Who are ye? ye needn't trouble yerself. I'm Jimmy's mother, and ye can't step between us."

"No, no, my good woman, I am your friend. You have been resting and now let me bathe your face and brush your hair, and then we'll talk of how you are to get your boy home to take care of you."

"Hev I been sick? ye talk sort o' queer,"—then looking around she continued, "Yes, I guess I hev, I'm not sure of me senses for I don't know where I am, sure."

"I have been cleaning up for Jimmy, that's all, and now you're ready for something to eat," and Mrs. Stubleton, who had the tea heating, placed the food on

the clean scoured table and drew it up to Mrs. McGinnis.

No heart is so hardened that kindness will not awaken a touch of feeling; some chord responds though it may be faintly, after years of callousing.

This uncouth creature looked at Mrs. Stubleton and said in a softened tone, "As sure as I live you're the first dacent woman I've met since me troubles cum, and now dear, if you'll just hand me the bottle that's on the floor in the corner beyant, I'll thank ye kindly." Of course the bottle was not there for Mag had purloined it, and had it been, Mrs. McGinnis would not have been favored with a "wee dhrop."

"Now neighbor, if you want to see your boy to-morrow, you must obey your nurse, you know, and we'll wait until your supper is digested before we think of your medicine bottle."

"I'll not be able to go long widout, but I'll mind ye now."

Then Mrs. Stubleton led her to talk of Jimmy and what a good mother could make of a son by worthy example, until the poor old creature was moved to penitent tears, and declared she would make a "dacent man uf her boy if she iver got him back."

Finally she fell into a sound sleep again and Mrs. Stubleton went home. She did not intend to lose the ground she had gained by leaving the woman alone, so she wrapped up a clean calico gown of her own and borrowed of her Scotch neighbor a shawl and hood and set out again. She sat down on one of the uncomfortable seats and leaned against the wall, and there she dozed and plied her knitting needles alternately. She took time while at home, however, to

make a pitcher of cayenne pepper tea, for well she knew something must be at hand to stop the craving which was sure to come with her charge's waking hours.

The weary night passed, and daylight came at last, and with it cold and hunger. Mrs. Stubleton was put to her wits' end to know where to turn for fuel and victuals, having herself too scant a store to borrow from that quarter. Just then Jerry's welcome face appeared at the door, bringing with him a basket of charcoal and kindling and also some bread and tea—coffee being a luxury seldom indulged in. His mother kissed his cheery face as she said, "What a comfort you are, Jerry, I was almost in despair." He was busy the while trying to start a fire in the miserable excuse for a stove. The clatter wakened the sleeper and she languidly raised herself, and looking around enquired, "What'n the divel is up now! Jimmy is it yerself that's up rattlin' like mad?" Then seeing it was Jimmy's enemy and her dazed senses beginning to comprehend the situation, she sat and stared vacantly for a few minutes before continuing, "Well, I'll not go fer ye agin if ye'll hand me that bottle in the corner faninst ye."

Mrs. Stubleton motioned Jerry to keep silent, and said in reply, "I'll see if I can find what you want Mrs. McGinnis," and spying an empty bottle on the cupboard shelf she turned her back while she filled it from the pitcher of pepper tea: this she handed to the poor creature, who was unable to tell the difference as it was equally as fiery, and the label on the bottle prevented her seeing the color of the liquid. She tipped it eagerly and took a good draught of the

stimulating fluid then smacking her lips, handed the bottle to Mrs. Stubleton who put it out of sight and continued her preparations for the scanty breakfast. "I hope you are feeling in good trim this morning, Mrs. McGinnis," she said, "for your boy will be expecting you bright and early at the hospital; I have brought a clean gown for you to put on, for it will please Jimmy to know your friends have not neglected you while he is laid up."

"Sure, it's very kind ye are, but I'm thinkin' yer friendly offices come rather late."

"That is what has been troubling me, Mrs. McGinnis, and I'm very sorry to say it: but I am a very busy woman and am obliged to work early and late to keep up with our needs, so you must forgive me for seeming indifferent."

"Then this is your boy, and yez are not one of the stuck-ups? Well, in that case I'll give ye me hand and thank ye," said the blear-eyed woman as she arose and, approaching Mrs. Stubleton, held out her hand. Mrs. Stubleton took it and pressed it kindly, then still retaining it in her own led her to the table where dry toast and tea was partaken of. Jerry then spoke up, "Mrs. McGinnis, do you want me to go with you to show you the way? Jimmy and me are friends now, and I'm going to help him find work."

"Faith! and that sounds like a Christian, and if ye mean what ye say come wid me and welcome."

So Jerry hastened to breakfast with Linnet, who was so far recovered as to be quite herself once more, though not strong enough to be allowed to exert herself in singing for the public. She had resumed her singing-lessons, hoping to again be able to earn some-

thing toward the family support. The young physician who had been called to attend her during her illness still continued to pay friendly calls, and all enjoyed his pleasant conversation and cheery manner.

Linnet's face would light up at sound of his step, and Jerry would laugh and say, "He's powerful fond of hearing you sing, Sis. I'm afraid he's neglecting his other patients."

"I notice you are as pleased at his visits as I, my young man, and you are never perfectly still only when he is here telling some of his stories, or singing with me."

"I'm squelched, I'll own up, and here's mother too, ready to fall down and worship the hero," he would say. So at last it came to be a natural thing to see Dr. Young step in at odd hours, sometimes in the morning and sometimes in the afternoon, but more often in the evening.

Mrs. Stubleton, with a mother's quick instinct detected the happy ring in her daughter's voice, and saw the lighting up of the sweet face on these various occasions, and marvelled much as to the result of these visits. She had questioned their friend, the Italian, concerning the physician, and he had spoken in warmest praise of the young man's principles and family, and bade her have no fears on that point. He had known him when but a boy, had played at parties in his father's house, and knew him to be an upright and energetic fellow. So the mother thus quieted could say no more, but trusted no rude wind would scatter the seeds of joy springing up in the heart so near and dear to her.

CHAPTER VIII.

JIMMY was feverish and excited: the mother's visit was momentarily expected, and his nervousness was born of fear as to her condition and appearance. He did not know how sincere a friend he had found in Jerry, and that he was at this very moment proving himself the good Samaritan; but when the door opened and Jerry's cheery face smiled a good morning, and just behind him came his mother, clean and womanly in appearance, Jimmy's heart beat with gladness and he knew to whom belonged the credit. He was so changed in looks that his mother scarcely recognized her tanned, freckled, dirty and ragged boy in the bleached, and well-cared-for lad before her. Jimmy's eyes were bright and his cheeks flushed; his gown and his cot white and clean, and altogether he was not an ill-looking, nor unattractive boy. When Mrs. McGinnis took in the scene fully, she embraced her son with an outburst of emotion so unusual that Jimmy boo-hoo'd right out! Convalescents are easily moved to tears, and although Jimmy was considered by the neighbors to be a hardened little wretch, love and sympathy touched a chord that in every nature exists, only when unused, like a musical instrument, it grows discordant, until a retuning is required to make it again give forth harmonious strains.

Jimmy was being retuned.

"God bless ye, me boy, and bless the kind lady who has made ye again me handsom' darlint."

"It's a funny thing to say, mother, but ye can thank Jerry, here, fer knockin' me senseless, er I never'd been brought to me senses," said Jimmy, laughing through his tears. "He's the best friend we've got beggen' the nurse's pardon, but she's a jewel I tell ye."

"Now, Mrs. McGinnis," said the nurse, "we will let Jimmy rest awhile and talk of yourself: he has told me something of your history and I am going to help you to a position where you can earn enough to care for both, and send your boy to school where he can learn to read and write, and in a little while be able to earn something for himself. I have found for you a good home where you can do laundry work, for Jimmy tells me that is your occupation."

"Sure and it is, mum, and there's no one can beat Biddy McGinnis when she's sober."

"Well, you are going to keep sober, for this position is to be in an asylum for inebriates; women like yourself, Mrs. McGinnis, who must have help in their endeavors to reform. You are to wash for the patients and receive pay besides your board; and Jimmy is to go to school; after which he can be of service about the institution; in many ways earning little sums for himself. You are to go right away, and Jimmy sent along; for he is now fairly recovered, and his mother will be all the nurse he needs. There! isn't that a bright opening for you?"

"God be praised, it is! and I'll niver ferget your blessed face as long as me bones carry me."

"Have you anything to go home for? if not, stay and lunch with Jimmy, and go in the ambulance when he is carried to your new home. If you are owing

rent, I will see your landlord and make it all right with him."

"Sure, and ye are akin to the blessed virgin with such saintliness; I'll do as ye say, and thank ye over and over."

The wise nurse knew with whom she dealt too well to allow her good work to be nipped in the bud by allowing Mrs. McGinnis her freedom again. So it was all settled that Jerry's mother should pack up what few possessions were left, and send them to the new abode.

Jerry returned, with the glad news, knowing full well its welcome reception to his mother and sister. He found his steps slowing up as he passed Mag's quarters, and he tried to look, without turning his head, at the windows.

She was sewing near the window and looked out just as he was passing. She rapped on the glass with her thimble, and Jerry, with a rosier tint in his broad face, halted and looked up. She beckoned him to come in, so he ascended the stairs. Mag met him at the door looking as fresh and as clean as a pink. "Come in, I haven't seen you since the rescue, how's Jimmy and his sweet mother?" she laughed merrily, and Jerry joined in. "Well, I've just left them, and by gum! they're in clover." Jerry then told Mag all the news relating to Jimmy and his mother.

"Good gracious! why I'm dumbfounded! that beats our luck all hollow, don't it, Jerry?"

"Well, maybe ours 'll come later on; I'm not sufferin' for luck just now." If Mag had been a society belle, she could not have asked a more admiring look

than Jerry now gave her, all unconscious as they both were of any implied compliment.

They chatted away like old friends, and each had many experiences to relate that were new and interesting to the other.

Jerry's hunger began to gnaw so loudly at length, that he could no longer make any excuse to stay, knowing it was far past noon, so he took his departure reluctantly, and sallied homeward. "Kind o' mean of me to stay so long when mother and Lin told me to come back as soon as possible, but Mag is such a chatterbox I couldn't get away; she's a mighty nice girl anyhow, and I'd like to give her something fer helpin' me out of that scrape with McGinnis." He felt in his pockets—"two nickels, can't get much with that. I'll pitch in to work now Jimmy's off my mind, and I'll make her some kind of a present as sure's my name's Jerry."

Mrs. Stubleton was alone, and just sitting down to bread and tea and potatoes.

"Gosh! I'm glad I come, I'm hollow as a drum. Where's Lin?" exclaimed Jerry, bursting into the room.

"Linnie has gone for a drive with Dr. Young, and I am so glad; it will be such a treat for her."

"Uh-hu—I see,—Ouch! that potato has been in the pot, its all-fired hot! Mother, I've been visiting Mag, and I think she's a heap nicer'n any boy I ever met. She don't say a single swear word, only uses a little slang by way of emphasis, you know. I don't know but she saved my life, and I'm going to make her a present when I'm flush enough. Wouldn't it be the correct thing?"

"I see no objection to it," replied his mother. "I am very glad indeed you have found a pleasant girl companion; it is something every boy needs to soften and tone down his nature to some refinement. I must call upon Mag's aunt, and see something of this new friend. What do you think she would like best to have for a gift?"

"Well, I heard her say if she could earn money she would buy books to read; and there's a book stand round the corner where they sell 'em awful cheap, I'll just look them over this afternoon. Can't you tell what kind would suit her? She's a jolly girl and don't want any solemn stories, I bet."

"Leave it to me, dear, and I will select what will be appropriate. I am going out after I see Linny safe at home, and we can have whatever I choose laid aside until you earn the money to pay for it."

The following week found Mag and Jerry poring over an old, worn copy of "Joe's Boys." They read aloud, turn about; neither being rapid readers, the book lasted for many evenings' enjoyment to the aunt, the old lady, and themselves—and when finished with Mag, Jerry took it and read it to his mother and sister; it is needless to say it created a thirst for more, and the reading aloud was of great service, as it not only improved the young people, but gave much pleasure to the elders who listened; and Jerry laid aside a few pennies each week for the purchase of good, wholesome books; and so to six persons the winter evenings became a source of pleasure and profit, through the acquaintance which sprang up between Mag and Jerry. Was it chance? I think not. Jerry was learning that all things work together

for good to them that love God, and Jerry had been taught all his life, that only in doing right, and ever trying to conquer our passions, can we find happiness. So, after his encounter with Jimmy, he had struggled as never before to overcome his quick temper, and he was beginning to reap the fruit of his endeavor. After the books served their purpose in these two families, Jerry would loan them to Jimmy, whose mother in her turn read them aloud: for Jimmy was plodding slowly through the first reader, and unable to decipher words of more than two syllables. So the good influence spread, as do all deeds, for good or evil; just as the circles keep widening and expanding when you throw a stone into the water. At first the little circle can be measured by your two hands, but how quickly it grows and multiplies until it becomes a part of the whole body of water.

CHAPTER IX.

JERRY was always glad to see a good heavy fall of snow, because he could make more at shovelling sidewalks than in blacking boots, and it was a welcome change. On this particular morning something occurred which changed his whole after life. As he was cleaning the snow from a certain house in a well-to-do neighborhood, and whistling "Chippy, get your hair cut" with all the vim of his sturdy nature, the sound of sleigh-bells caused him to look in the direction whence the jingle proceeded. What he saw stopped his whistle in the midst of the hair-cutting, and whether it was cut long or short will never be known so far as it relates to that particular morning. Up the street at a mad gallop came a frightened horse, attached to a cutter in which sat a young girl not over twelve years of age; pale and terror-stricken, desperately clinging to the back of the seat, apparently undecided whether to leap out, or remain and take her chances. Jerry took in the situation in a twinkling, and remembering the railroad crossing at the head of the street toward which the maddened brute was racing, he instantly resolved to turn its course even if he could not stop its onward career: he planted himself firmly in the middle of the road and with uplifted snow-shovel awaited the onslaught. He swung the shovel with the force of desperation and aimed a telling blow in the animal's face. The horse reared and fell back on its haunches.—Before it could recover

its footing Jerry threw away the shovel and clung to its head until some passers-by came to his assistance, and then giving a glance at the little lady whose life he had perhaps saved, met a pair of big brown eyes filled with tears, looking into his. He blushed and started to pick up his shovel and resume business, when a sweet voice asked, "Won't you tell me your name? I shall never forget your bravery."

"O, that's all right," was Jerry's only response, and he began tossing the snow once more. Just then the driver, who had gone into a store for some purchase, leaving the child, as he supposed, in perfect safety with the old family horse, came running and panting and white with a terrible fear—for as he reached the cutter the train came thundering along the track and he shuddered as he thought what might have been. He picked up the lines and sat down utterly collapsed for the time being: finally he revived enough to ask, "Who stopped him?" "That boy on the sidewalk, James, and I want you to find out his name and where he lives, he wouldn't tell me," said the young girl by his side.

"Hello, sonny, come here and pick up my whip, will you?" called James, for he meant to use a little strategy.

"Yes, sir," and Jerry hastened to do the man's bidding; as he handed the whip, James said, "Why I've seen you before, your name is Dave White, you live down near Spiketon with your grandmother."

"No, sir, you've got the wrong pig by the ear; my name is Jerry Stubleton and I live with my mother on Frazier Street."

"O, yes, yes, I remember, Frazier Street near—near—"

"Near Fourth Avenue," replied innocent Jerry.

"That's it. Well you're a brave boy, and I'm under everlasting obligations to you my boy, here's my hand," and he gave Jerry's cold hand a hearty shake as he drove off.

"Where have I ever seen that man before," and Jerry stood and scratched his head, vainly trying to recall the meeting. "Another pretty girl," he mused, "seems to me they're springing up like toad-stools—all at once." Jerry was just reaching the age when the opposite sex begins to have some attraction, and had only begun to recognize the charm of a pair of bright eyes, rosy cheeks, and girlish smiles. He finished his work, collected his quarter of a dollar, and went whistling up the street, stopping wherever an unshovelled sidewalk blocked his way. He found as noon approached that he had earned a dollar and a half, and being ravenously hungry and far from his own neighborhood, he went into a restaurant to order some lunch. He saw some men leaning on the counter drinking beer, and liquors of various kinds. "Humph! I don't want to ruin my reputation by eating in such a place, I'll go hungry first," and with this soliloquy Jerry hastily left the saloon. He reached a more respectable quarter and seeing the sign, "Lunch Room for Ladies and Gentlemen," concluded to try again. It was in a basement, and Jerry found a number of decent-looking people seated around the various tables: he didn't know exactly what to do, but sat down in an obscure corner and watched the others; pretty soon a colored waiter approached and threw a printed bill of fare before Jerry. He scanned it, and then ordered of the waiter some ham and eggs and a cup of coffee,

bread and butter being served gratis when meat was ordered. He was pitching in like a good fellow, when all at once somebody came up behind and gave him a resounding slap on the shoulder. He jumped as though he were shot, and turned to face his assailant, when a familiar voice exclaimed, "How are you, old chap, I'm mighty glad to see you!"

"Well, I'll be hanged if it ain't Jimmy! how de do? Where'd you rain from?" delightedly cried Jerry.

"Well, I come up for one of the Hos' patients—got a son here and I bring notes and p'kages, and get ten cents fur it, and somthin' to eat besides, that's the feller," and Jimmy pointed to the bookkeeper, a young man with a pleasant face, who nodded to Jimmy, and motioned a waiter, who soon brought Jimmy a plate of bread and a bowl of hot soup; then the boys had a jolly little visit, and Jerry learned that Mrs. McGinnis was doing well, and her son, quite recovered, was proving himself well worthy the good nurse's care and interest.

Jimmy was no longer ragged and unkempt; his clothes were cheap and coarse to be sure, but clean and tidy. His hair was close cut, and his face and hands clean, and he had a manner of self-respect due to these conditions. Jerry, with his many patches, felt quite in the shade; he couldn't help thinking—"I wish I hadn't looked so seedy when that pretty girl looked at me so, all the while that driver was talking to me." Not for the world would he have given voice to these thoughts in his mother's presence, for he knew too well how it pained her to keep him so poorly clad. He always made light of it when she alluded to the subject.

The friends—as we must hereafter consider these two boys—left the lunch room together, and just outside encountered some school boys who began pelting them with snow balls; the boys, ready for the sport, returned the fire, and although it was four against two, Jimmy and Jerry held their own and finally chased their foes from the field. The laugh was on the other side however, when Jerry saw the foremost boy dragging his snow shovel behind him, and when at a safe distance, lifting it and swinging it with a shout of victory in which all the others joined. “Come along, Jim, we won’t give in to the robbers,” and away they ran like deers, and not until the schoolhouse was reached did the boys yield their trophy.

“When I can earn money enough, Jim, I’m going to invest in some school books. I begin to feel like knowing something.”

“Well, I don’t take much stock in books of that kind, I like something excitin’ and that’ll stir a feller’s blood,” replied Jimmy, “and I wouldn’t change places with them kids if I could.”

What was it that was stirring Jerry’s heart to reach out for something better than he had known? Only this—a butterfly had flitted across his path and the caterpillar’s garb in comparison looked low and mean, he wanted to leave the worm and chase the wings.

CHAPTER X.

THE next day, while Mrs. Stubleton was unwrapping a parcel which she had just brought home, her eye caught sight of a name on the paper that caused her to start and exclaim, "Why! what in the world!" then she read, aloud, "A runaway which might have resulted fatally to the daughter of Mr. Heartwell but for the courage and presence of mind of a lad named Jerry Stubleton, took place yesterday morning on Blank Street near the railway crossing. The merchant's daughter was holding the lines, while his man made some purchases, when some young rascal threw a snowball which struck the horse's flank, and not being used to the whip it is supposed the high-spirited steed took offence at the insult and resolved to punish the perpetrator by running away. He was nearing the railroad when the lad mentioned stopped him by a blow in the face with his snow shovel, and then clung to him until help arrived. The boy deserves great credit for his prompt action."

"Why, Linnet! do you hear this? and the dear boy never even mentioned it."

"Just like him; he verifies the scripture, 'Let not your right hand know what the left hand doeth,'" replied his fond sister.

A few moments later there came a rap at the door. On opening it Mrs. Stubleton beheld a man of middle age, with a kindly, beaming face, well dressed and bearing the impress of a gentleman.

"How do you do, madam. Is this Mrs. Stubleton?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir: will you walk in and be seated?"

"Thank you; I called to see you in reference to your son—a noble lad, Mrs. Stubleton, who has placed me under everlasting obligations by saving my daughter's life, at least I so believe."

"Don't speak of it, sir, I don't see how the dear boy could have done otherwise under the circumstances; he feels so, I am sure, as he did not even mention it at home. I only just saw an account of it in this paper which was wrapped about some work I just brought home."

"You don't say so! Why, I don't know how to reward such a nature. I must relieve my overflowing gratitude in some way, but a boy of his spirit must be approached carefully. I—don't say a word, madam—not a word, just put yourself in my place and you'll know exactly how I feel. I'm a man with ample means, and only one child, my daughter, to take care of. I don't need to inquire into your circumstances, but I see plainly you were born for something better than these surroundings. Now, I want your son to come to my store, I have a position that I can give him and let him work up gradually as he learns, or shows ability. Here is my card, send him to-morrow. Good morning, madam." And before she could say another word the busy man had closed the door behind him.

"Well,—well,—*well*! what next! It seems to me I have seen that man before, his eyes looked so familiar, in their expression, like my father's"—here Mrs. Stubleton uttered a sigh that was almost a moan.

"There, dearie," cried Linnet, "you must not touch on that subject, you always get so melancholy when you allude to your girlhood or your home. I know you have suffered greatly since your marriage, but we are so peaceful now, and O, Mamma dear, the world is so charming to me, even though I am blind; just to live and love and be loved—by you and Jerry—is enough to make life worth living."

"Ah, sweet heart! so it is, to love and be loved—what more can youth ask for? At your age I felt the same,—and I too was blind," she mentally concluded.

What a gabbling when Jerry came and heard the news of the visit, and the report in the paper of the runaway. How his blood stirred and his heart beat: he was elated, as any boy would be and read the article wherein his name appeared in print, with as much pride as a young aspiring author feels, when he sees his first article before the public, and believes the eyes of the wide world are as much interested in that piece of printed paper as himself.

That night Jerry dreamed that he was sole proprietor of the largest dry goods house in New York, and that all the other merchants came to his store to have their boots blacked, and that the money from this source alone amounted to one thousand dollars a day, and this was all spent in providing for the poor. His mother was the mistress of an elegant mansion in which dwelt the dark-eyed maiden whose life he was said to have saved. Then Mag appeared to him also, and seated herself by his side in her candid way as she opened a book and read to him these words, "All things work together for good to them that love God." Holding up this volume Jerry read the title, "Kings

of the Battle Field," a book he and Mag were at present reading together, one of his recent purchases.

He said aloud, "I am king of the poor!" His mother called to him to know what he was dreaming about, and thus his bright vision vanished. Was there something prophetic in this dream?

The next morning he brushed up his clothes and made himself as presentable as possible before seeking the merchant's presence. His mother saw that his worn shoes were well blacked, his collar and tie in good order, and a clean handkerchief in his pocket, and then kissing him good-bye, returned to her sewing, while Linnet busied herself with some household duties. She had regained health and strength, and her voice seemed richer and purer than ever before. Her singing teacher came twice a week and was now teaching her some church music, as he intended to secure her a position in some choir at an early day, well knowing such a soloist could command a fine salary if once she could be heard. So with her music (her physician had presented her with a harp, and this took up much of her time), she was busy and very happy. Dr. Young came more often now, and seldom an evening passed that he did not drop in for a few moments at least. He was very open in his admiration for his patient and took much delight in bringing books to read to her, and was delighted at her bright criticisms and appreciative remarks.

CHAPTER XI.

JERRY, after frequently consulting the card which the merchant had left with his mother, at last stood before an imposing structure and read this sign in gold letters, "J. I. Heartwell, Wholesale and Retail Dry Goods." He paused to admire the rich drapings and the exquisite bric-a-brac displayed in the large plate windows, then shyly entered. He looked around in amazement at the immensity of the building, and the many men and women behind the counters, the cash boys running hither and thither, for this happened before the basket system, and Mr. Heartwell was among the last to adopt the new method, for he could not see his way clear in turning off so many little helpers in the homes of those who furnished his cash boys. He was a philanthropist, and took great delight in his benevolent schemes: for instance he had rented a large room, furnished it with desks and books, and gymnastic appliances, and here twice a week his cash boys were sent after store hours to a supper of doughnuts and coffee, and then required to study for an hour; then recite to a man and his wife whom Mr. Heartwell had provided as teachers and instructors, and who were very clever and amiable people. After study and recitations, a half hour in gymnastics followed, and then the lads went to their several homes strengthened and refreshed in body and mind. Nor was this all. Service and Sunday school was held here, where the parents as well as the child-

ren could be benefited, Mr. Heartwell providing a clergyman when possible and sometimes reading a chapter himself and bringing home the Bible truths in a way so simple and earnest that even the children were interested.

How his employees loved and respected him can easily be imagined; how the parents of these children blessed their friend and benefactor. And it really seemed as though riches and honor abundantly flowed into the good man's life: the more he gave the more he prospered. He never forgot from whence came his blessings, and gave God the praise. Often in his office his soul was on its knees.

This then, was the man whom Jerry had come to see. He felt bewildered until a gentleman said to him, "What would you like to see, youngster?"

"I want to see Mr. Heartwell, sir."

"Out of the question, now; Mr. Heartwell is looking over his mail at this hour. What's your name. I'll take it to him."

"My name is Jerry Stubleton, and I——"

"Oh! that alters the case. Ah, ha, you're in luck, young man!" and the floor-walker led the way to the office followed by the wondering boy.

"Master Jerry Stubleton," announced the man as he threw open the office door. Before his desk sat the merchant with a heap of mail in front of him.

"Well, Master Jerry, I am glad to see you," said Mr. Heartwell as he held out his hand to Jerry, who instantly responded to the sentiment, without, however, saying so. He felt his heart go out and grasp something tangible in this man's proffered friendship. He felt that he could give him a son's love; yet he had but

just met him for one moment. Mr. Heartwell looked steadily into Jerry's face for a few seconds before saying anything further, and in that look who dares say their hearts were not riveted? Can there not be love at first sight between man and man as well as between the sexes?

"Jerry, my boy, how old are you?"

"Fourteen, sir."

"What is your present occupation?"

"Boot black, sir."

"How much can you average a day at that business?"

"Well, sir, there is so many boys in the trade that one don't stand much chance of getting rich. I make about fifty cents a day."

"And does that keep you in clothes?"

"No, sir, I give it to mother to help her along. She can't make much at sewing, but she tries hard enough. Sometimes she can't get work and then I have to scratch around pretty lively," said Jerry with a laugh.

"Have you no father?"

How thankful Jerry was to say, "No, sir," rather than acknowledge an intemperate one.

"Well, Jerry, come with me, and after you are fitted out in some decent clothes, we'll talk further." And Mr. Heartwell led the way to the boy's clothing department.

"Clark," he said, addressing the man in attendance, "fit this lad out in a good all-wool suit, and then take him to the hosiery department, get a half dozen pairs of socks—and have him a good pair of shoes also—yes, and some shirts—fit him all through from head to foot, and then bring him to me."

"All right, sir," and in less than an hour Jerry was utterly unable to recognize the boy that was known by that name. He felt like a cat in a strange garret and not at all at his ease as he again entered Mr. Heartwell's sanctum.

"Well, my son," exclaimed that gentleman, "I can answer for it, you look better than you feel just at present, but you'll soon get used to the new harness, and forget that you've ever been a colt when you get to be an old horse like myself. Now, Jerry, I'm of the opinion that an indoor life will be very distasteful to you, and therefore, I propose to put you on the delivery wagon. How would you like that?"

"What is it, sir? I don't think I understand."

"Well, our parcels are all carried in a wagon and left at the houses of the purchasers—our customers. Your business would be to have the packages ready and as soon as the driver stops on his route, you are to carry the package into the house, or deliver it at the door. When you learn the route you may perhaps take the driver's place. How would you like this position?"

"I'd like it, you bet I would, sir. I've always wanted to drive horses."

"Very well, I shall pay you at present five dollars a week; you will begin to-morrow; when not occupied otherwise, you will assist in wrapping parcels. Now, you can go, and be here promptly at eight o'clock. Good day, sir."

"Thank you, sir. I'll try to suit you, but I'm afraid I'll be pretty awkward at first. Good-bye." And as Jerry flew homeward, Mr. Heartwell smiled to himself and said, "He's as bright a looking boy as I

ever saw. I like his cheery, honest face : if I'm not mistaken there's the making of a noble man in him."

Mr. Heartwell had a way of his own in doing good works. Many men would have presented Jerry with some expensive gift for the service rendered and there would have been the end ; not so with Mr. Heartwell, he preferred to go slow and study human nature, believing that by showing a continued interest in those he desired to benefit, he was doing as he would be done by, and his conscience, at peace with God and man, was his blessed reward.

Jerry wrapped at his mother's door and to her "Come in," he opened it and stood in the room for an instant without saying a word, then, lifting his cap, he bowed himself almost to the floor, as he said, "Madam, is your son, Mr. Jerry Stubleton, at home?"

With uplifted hands his mother cried, "No indeed, he is not at home in such an elegant outfit! Why Linny, here's a young man in a faultless suit from top to toe, who can he be? his face says Jerry—his clothes say——"

"Nary," laughed the happy boy, and his mother could but join in, while Linnet's touch soon convinced her of her brother's metamorphosis.

Jerry strutted around with his arms behind him, then with his coat thrown open and his thumbs in his vest arm-holes, all the while talking as fast as his tongue could run. "It's just the very place I want ; think of riding around with two fine horses and an elegant wagon ; I saw them in front of the store, and some day I'll be driver. O, jeminy crickets! You can go with me, Lin, and not depend upon that snob of a doctor to take you out riding."

"Jerry, don't speak so disrespectfully of Dr. Young; he is a dear, kind friend, and I won't hear him called a snob," said his sister with some spirit.

"Talk of the D—— and he's sure to appear; there's Doc's buggy now," and Jerry hastened to admit the young physician and see his look of surprise when beholding the new suit.

"Hello! why what's this? Been finding more pocketbooks, Jerry?"

"Well! that makes me think, there must be some charm about them initials," exclaimed Jerry, "'J. I.' on the old pocketbook, and Mr. Heartwell's initials are 'J. I.'"

"Remarkable coincidence," laughed Dr. Young, as he turned to Linnet, saying, "The air is so clear and bracing I thought it would do you good to have a short drive, Linnet; would you enjoy it?" There was an unhidden ring of tenderness in his voice whenever he addressed his blind patient, and a look of deep admiration when his eyes rested on her face, while Linnet's whole manner, face, and voice too surely betrayed the pleasure she felt in the young man's society.

As soon as they had departed, Jerry said, "Mother, what'll you bet that chap don't run off some day with Linny and marry her?"

"Nonsense, Sonny! What would we do without her, and what would he do with a sightless wife?"

"Love her, I reckon, just as we do, and I fer one don't blame him."

"How much we have to thank God for, Jerry; first our Italian friend; then the Doctor, and last, but not least, Mr. Heartwell comes to brighten and lift the clouds from our life. That name sounds familiar to me.

My father had a dear friend by the name of Heartwell; they were college classmates." And Mrs. Stubleton fell into one of her musing moods.

"I'm going over to tell the good news to Mag, she'll be just wild over it," and away went Jerry to tell his chum of the good fortune that had befallen him. He found her tying on a clean white apron, ready to pick up her sewing, having just finished the morning sweeping and dusting.

When Jerry appeared she clapped her hands, and leaped clear off her feet, then turned him round and round until even his vanity was perfectly satisfied.

"My gracious!" she exclaimed after hearing his story. "I'll go *there* to get my new dress just to have you bring it home. I'm *awful* glad, Jerry," she said with unfeigned earnestness. And Jerry thought, "I can soon give her something better than a second-hand book."

CHAPTER XII.

JERRY's first day was a hard one: everything was new and strange, and he found his companions ready either to laugh or scold at his awkwardness and mistakes. However, it is an experience that must be gone through by every one who battles with the world, and Jerry's life had not been a pampered one; he was used to knocking about, and although it was not in his nature to kick any one when they were down, he could be aggressive enough to maintain his rights, and not be imposed upon. In a few days things began to grow more familiar, and the fact of his being the boy who had so bravely rescued Mr. Heartwell's pretty daughter from a terrible death, becoming known among the clerks and cash boys, he was treated with deference and respect due to heroism. He very soon learned to read the names and get the parcels in systematic order for delivery, so that very little delay was caused on the trip after the first week or so. Occasionally he took the lines, and then no king was happier than he. How sorry he felt for the poor boot blacks they passed in the streets.

Jerry had a very tender heart and a very generous nature. He was always longing to be rich that he might help the more unfortunate than himself, and was also keenly observant of what was passing around him. I think we could sum up his nature in one word—unselfishness.

Did you ever think that selfishness is Satan's right-

hand partner? You will soon be convinced of it if you will take the trouble to look around you a very little.

One day he espied two news boys pummelling each other abusively, while a crowd of idlers stood looking on, apparently enjoying the contest, although a very unequal one, for the boy who was down, although a plucky little chap, was much younger and of a delicate build, which aroused Jerry's sympathies immediately. He sprang from the wagon without a moment's thought, and picking up some snow and forming it into a ball as he ran, aimed it at the larger boy, and struck him just where he intended—directly between the eyes. The boy, who was just in the act of giving his fallen foe a cruel blow, staggered and fell; then recovering himself, started to find the assailant. All eyes had been so intent on the combatants that no one saw Jerry's act, and when they turned they only saw a boy climbing into a wagon. Jerry was too wise to look around for a few moments, but when he ventured to do so, he was glad to see the crowd dispersing, while the bully was shaking his fist defiantly toward the moving spectators. He chuckled to himself, while Dick, the man who was driving, slapped him on the back and said "You're a trump, Jerry; where did you learn to hit the mark so square in the face?"

"It was Providence to-day, I guess; sometimes it's only luck," placidly replied Jerry.

"Do you believe in Providence?" Dick inquired.

Jerry looked at him with eyes wide open. "What'd you say?" he asked, not comprehending.

"Do you believe in Providence, in God, and heaven, and all that moonshine?"

"Well! don't you?"

"Not exactly; but why don't you answer my question?"

"Why, because I know you're jokin'. Do you believe in the Devil, in sin, and all that sort of folly?" asked Jerry, Yankee fashion.

"Well, you can jest bet your boots I *do*!"

"Do you believe the Devil made the world?" next inquired Jerry.

"No; I don't know as I ever thought much about who made it; guess it came by chance."

"Do you believe the Devil made you? Because if he did, Dick, you ain't very grateful to him, for you're a pretty good specimen of what God makes. You don't smoke, drink, chew, nor swear, and you support your mother, and you're mighty fond of her, too; I tell you, old boy, you've gone back on your master if you belong to the Old Nick."

"You're right, Jerry, I have gone back on him, but I tell you there ain't many men like Mr. Heartwell or I might have a better opinion of the world. He made me what I am. He caught me stealin' something out of his store when I was quite a boy, and instead of handin' me over to the police he just took me into his office, and before he got through I was cryin' for the first time in years, and he jest went home with me, and bought some provision on the way, and told my mother he wanted a new cash boy and would she spare me, and then he got her to cryin'; but he didn't mean to, only we wasn't used to kindness and it went to some soft spot in our hearts that hadn't been touched before. My father died in prison, and my mother was sickly, and I just was goin' to the

dogs. But that's years ago—I believe in Mr. Heartwell, but I can't believe so easy in what I can't see or feel."

"Well, ever since I was knee high to a grasshopper I have been taught to believe in God and I can't believe anything else, and I don't want to," said Jerry.

"There seems to be more in Satan's army than in God's, that's all I've got to say," and Dick looked unconvinced.

"Well, if you could hear my mother, I guess you'd believe too. She says nobody would deny God if they would only read the Bible. Do you go to Mr. Heartwell's Sunday school?"

"No, I've been promising to go to church there, but I don't seem to catch on, and I know its ungrateful. I think of it a good deal."

"Humph! mother would say that was God workin' in your heart, and I shouldn't wonder myself if 'twas."

Dick looked startled. "Well, my mother don't talk that way, or maybe I would feel different, but she's seen a heap of trouble, and feels sort of hard."

"Well, sir, if she has seen more than my mother, then I pity her, that's all I've got to say. And when I say to her, 'Mother, I don't see why God makes you suffer so much trouble, you never did anything to deserve it,' she always says 'I do deserve it, or it would not be sent, and we must all bear a cross before we can wear a crown.' She says if young people were not so headstrong, and would take their parents' advice instead of having their own way and learning by hard experience it would save a deal of suffering all around."

"Well," replied Dick, "I never got much advice

from my parents either way; I got more cuffs and blows than anything else from my father, and scoldings from my mother 'til since Mr. Heartwell helped us out of the mire; now she's as good as anybody's mother, only she don't take much to religion."

"How long have you been with Mr. Heartwell?" asked Jerry.

"Let me see. I'm eighteen now; I was about twelve, I guess, when he took me as cash boy; then when I got to be fourteen or long about there I became one of the elevator boys; I didn't like that, too much confined air for a fellow that had lived out of doors. So Mr. Heartwell put me where you are now, and then I worked up to this position. Some day I expect to get a clerkship, but I won't like it half so well, only it's better pay, and I'd like to be able to do a little more for mother."

"Do you go to the night school?" next queried Jerry.

"O, yes; I wouldn't miss that. Why, I didn't know no more about reading and writing when I first went there than that mule," pointing his whip to the animal in question. "Now I can read to mother, and it passes the evenings in a jiffy. You know there is a whole library of the best kind of readin' at the school-room, and when we have perfect lessons we're allowed to take a book home."

"Jolly scheme!—Look out! there's the fire engine tearing this way! turn quick, to your right," cried Jerry. Too late! The wheels were locked for an instant, and then on flew the engine, leaving a wreck behind.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE two boys were so busily engaged in their conversation and so accustomed to noise and clatter that they had not heeded until too late the approaching fire engine. Dick was thrown out of the wagon in such a way as to fall directly under the wheel in the rear, which passed over his right foot, crushing it badly. Jerry seized the lines and succeeded in stopping the team. A policeman cleared the way, while he summoned another to his side to order the patrol wagon. As soon as possible Dick was conveyed to the hospital. Jerry was in despair; but soon collecting his wits he left the wagon in charge of the police while he hastened to acquaint Mr. Heartwell of the disaster. That person instantly ordered a cab, and with all speed hastened to the hospital, and arrived just in time to avert what he feared—amputation of the foot.

“Not a bit of it; no, sir! I am surgeon enough to know that it is unnecessary: that foot must be saved, and I will foot all the bills.”

The surgeon in attendance, realizing that he was in the presence of a master spirit, tried to withdraw as gracefully as possible from the field. He was quite a young man, and as is usual felt his own importance. “I grant you there is a possibility of saving it, but if blood poisoning is the result, please bear in mind, I am free from blame,” he loftily said.

“Have no fear, sir, his young and sturdy nature

will pull him through all right. I once had a worse crushed foot than that, and but for the timely interference of my father, would to-day have been on crutches. You professionals are too ready to prove your skill with the knife," a little warmly said Mr. Heartwell.

He remained until Dick's foot was properly cared for, and bidding him keep his mind free from worry—as that would surely retard his recovery—promising to see that his mother's wants were attended to, and to call again on the morrow, Mr. Heartwell departed.

Jerry, as soon as Mr. Heartwell had left the store, informed the head clerk of the accident, and was soon on his way in company with others to the scene of the disaster. The goods were transferred to another wagon, and Jerry proceeded sadly on his way, in company with an older and less congenial companion for a driver. He couldn't help thinking how easily it might have been averted, and resolving never again to be so short-sighted. Again, he would feel such gratitude that *he* had been spared any such misfortune. "I'll bet my mother's prayers have saved me many and many an accident in my life." The dear child did not give himself any credit for trying to be worthy of her prayers and God's goodness.

On the following Sunday, Jerry saw Dick for the first time after the accident. He found him sitting up, his foot elevated, and looking in the best of spirits.

"Hullo! Jerry! I'm glad to see you. I'm getting tired of doing nothing and being waited upon, and it's awful lonesome here, too, but I tell you these people have been all-fired good to me, and my nurse is an angel without wings. If I stay here another week I

guess she'll fetch me around to your way of thinkin' about Providence and all that. Why, I believe she's just as good-hearted as Mr. Heartwell, and you can't say anything more in praise of any living soul."

"He's a right bower and no mistake. I've played at cards very little, but I know he's the best chap in the pack," said Jerry.

"Say, I wonder if I'll be well enough for the Christmas party; I wouldn't miss it for a whole roast turkey," and Dick took up the crutch beside him and attempted to cross the floor. His nurse happened in at the moment and bade him not to do so again without her sanction, and in her presence.

On looking up Jerry was delighted to see "Sister Martha," as she was called—Jimmy's nurse. "Why!" she exclaimed, "here's our old friend Jerry, and how well he is looking. I think your lines must have fallen in pleasant places, my boy."

Jerry was in the dark as to the application of this remark, but he was quick at perception, so he replied:

"I've been in luck ever since I had that fight with Jimmy, Sister Martha."

"Well, how funny! Jimmy was here to see me a few days ago and he said almost the exact words, only substituting your name for his. There must have been something providential in that encounter, don't you think so?"

"Indeed I do." Here Jerry gave a knowing look at Dick, to which the latter responded, "It may be something will come of this accident that you can lay it to Providence, but I don't see how it can."

"What party were you talking about just now, when Sister Martha came in?" queried Jerry.

"The Christmas party: Mr. Heartwell has a dinner at the school-room for all the boys, and invites their families, and we spend the evening, and have games and a glorious good time. O, I can't miss that! Won't I be able to go, Sister Martha?"

"I think you will; even if you cannot dance a jig, you can watch the others, and help eat the turkey and plum pudding, and make yourself so agreeable that you will forget your lame foot."

In a little while Dick's mother came on her daily visit, and was greatly pleased at her boy's improvement. She related how good Mr. Heartwell had sent her fuel and provisions, and had kept her supplied with work, and then Dick and Jerry put in a word of praise for their employer, and vowed there was nothing they would not do for him. At this moment a low rap; and then in walked Mr. Heartwell. He shook hands all around most cordially, and then questioned Dick as to how he was feeling.

"O, thanks to you, sir, and my good nurse, I am almost well."

"You must not be too eager to try your foot, Dick; if you do, I'll not be responsible for the consequences. It was a bad bruise, and it will take another week at least before you can be out, even with crutches."

"Will it be so I can get to the Christmas party, Mr. Heartwell, do you think?"

"O, yes, let me see, that is less than two weeks; yes, if you are careful, I will see that you get there."

"Thank you, I *will* be careful."

Mr. Heartwell drew from his pocket a book which he handed Dick, saying, "Here is something to beguile the hours; when that is finished, we'll find something

else ; now I must bid you all good day," and bowing, Mr. Heartwell took his leave.

Looking at the title of the book Dick read, "Ben Hur, a Tale of the Christ." He looked a trifle bored. His nurse observed the expression, and asked to see the book. "Ah, this is just the sweetest story you could read," and she, knowing she could better interpret the idea than he, with his unschooled mind, began reading aloud ; after a few pages, she closed the book. "O, don't stop, please read a little more," begged Dick, and his mother added her entreaties. It was such a treat to the little woman to hear some one read without stumbling over long words, and the voice was sweet and musical. So Sister Martha read on and on for two long hours, then went to prepare Dick's dinner, and Dick continued reading to his mother, who was invited to spend the day with her boy : and very quiet and peaceful it proved to the toiling woman.

At the close of the day, Sister Martha read a chapter from the New Testament, and both Dick and his mother felt an awakening to the truth never before experienced.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHRISTMAS morning dawned beautifully clear, and sharp and keen was the air; giving a zest to life never felt in the warmer climes.

Jerry was up shovelling the sidewalks; not that he was really obliged to now, but he loved it, and he felt like a young colt this morning: he had cleared the sidewalk in front of Mag's home, when he first started out and given her a ringing "Merry Christmas" as he shouldered his snow shovel and marched onward. Mag caught the sound and sprang out of her bed to give an answering shout, but he was disappearing up the street when she got to the window.

She and the rest of the family were taking a sort of luxury nap not often vouchsafed to the poor.

There was no more sleep for Mag, so she dressed herself quickly and neatly. Mag was by nature a tidy, orderly girl, and so cheery that everyone liked to have her about. When she had completed her toilet, and had tied on a warm hood, wrapped a shawl about her, and encased her hands in some new mittens her grandmother had presented her with on the day before, she sallied out of the house; and what then? Why, she began making snow-balls and heaping them up close to the doorway. She knew Jerry must pass that way on his return, and she knew also that hunger would soon bring him homeward; laughing to herself as she worked, thinking of the frolic in store, she made a

very pretty picture, with her scarlet hood and mittens, her bright eyes and rosy cheeks.

She had not long to wait when a merry whistle sounded up the street. She screened herself in the doorway with a half dozen balls in her arms, and as soon as Jerry got near enough, she took good aim, and whack! came a snow-ball square in the face. While he was brushing it from his eyes the saucy girl pelted him thick and fast, and her laugh rang out in a perfect abandon of merriment. Jerry hastily gathers up some snow and in a twinkling is returning the fire, all the while approaching nearer and nearer his daring assailant.

At length, without her being conscious of the lessening distance, so great has been her excitement, the foe dashes her face with a handful of loose snow, and then while she is recovering, puts his arm around her neck and holds her firmly while her face receives such a washing as will make it glow for many an hour.

She struggles and twists out of his grasp finally, and disappears inside the door.

"Conquered!" shouts Jerry.

"No, only retreated to gather breath," calls back Mag; then opening the door bids Jerry "stay hostilities for the present," and holds up to his gaze a pair of mittens matching her own.

"There!" she exclaims, "is Granny's gift for you, and here is mine." She took from the shelf a knitted cap of dark brown wool, her own handiwork. "There," she said, putting it on and drawing it over his ears, "isn't that comfortable?"

"O, Mag; you're a jewel! that's just what I have been wanting. I'm awful sorry I gave your face such a

rubbing down, I'll let you wash mine to pay for it," magnanimously quoth Jerry.

"Humph! no fun in that; I'm doing worse, I'm heaping coals of fire on your head, which is greater torture than putting ice on your face," she laughed.

"You're right. But, hello, I'm forgetting your present!" and here Jerry drew from his pocket a very tasteful silver pin, small and inexpensive, but genuine for all that—his earnings from snow-shoveling.

"O, how *lovely*! Grandma! auntie! see this sweet pin;" and she held up very proudly the little shaft with a lily bell drooping over the centre. While they were admiring, Jerry was half way home, not waiting for the thanks he cared not to receive, but which he knew would come so profusely.

As he neared home he noticed Mr. Heartwell's delivery wagon in front of their house, and the driver called: "Here, Jerry," and threw out a package which Jerry caught in his arms, and seeing his mother's name on it carried it into the house and presented it with a bow.

She opened it wonderingly; and to her astonishment took out a black cashmere dress, plain, but of good quality; also a black hood and shawl. Then came a long blue cloak, and hood of dark blue, for Linnet, and in a small package for Jerry was a pocket-book containing a ten-dollar gold piece.

"Why, there must be some mistake, this can't be for us."

"No, ma'am" said Jerry, "here's your name, 'Mrs. Stubleton;' and here's 'Linnet' on this cloak, and, by George! there's no mistake in this, for you see here is 'Jerry' on this package. Oh, my employer don't do

things half way, I tell you," proudly exclaimed the boy.

Then picking up a note which had dropped from the package, before unobserved, she opened it and read :

"MY DEAR MADAM,

"If you will kindly attend our annual dinner party at No 54 —— street, and assist in superintending the youngsters, you will confer a favor. Your daughter and son will, of course, accompany you. Wishing you a Merry Christmas, I remain yours truly,

"J. I. HEARTWELL."

"O, that's jolly! mother and Lin; and Mr. Heartwell told me yesterday not to fail to be on hand, and if I wanted I could bring a friend."

"Ah! you young rascal," laughed his sister, "you asked if you might, now confess."

"Well, so I did, and he said 'Yes, bring a half dozen if you like. I know you will bring none but well behaved people.'"

"That was very flattering, dear," said his mother, "and who is this friend?"

"Why, mother, can't you guess? It's Mag, of course," candidly replied Jerry. "Sis, don't you want to ask Dr. Young?"

"Nonsense," was her non-committal reply.

A rap at the door and the Italian was ushered in with a "Merry Christmas" all around.

Then Linnet exclaimed: "I'll tell you who I *do* want, and that is this good friend;" and she got him to promise he would go and take his harp and give the party of young and old a treat, she agreeing to sing and play also.

Dr. Young drove up just as the family were leaving

the house to enter a long low sledge provided by Mr. Heartwell to convey the distant guests to the feast. Dr. Young looked at Linnet in her new outfit with eyes that plainly said, "How charming you do look!" and then taking her arm seated her in his own stylish cutter with an air of proprietorship that amused Jerry exceedingly. And when the sledge drew up at Mag's door, and he jumped out and rapped at the door and Mag appeared as rosy and as blithe as the dawn, and he tucked her away and seated himself beside her, his mother smiled as she thought,

"Would the Power the giftie gie us
To see ourselves as others see us."

What a merry Christmas party it was! Everybody seemed in a good humor, and there was no waiting for formal introductions among the elders of the party; one and all seemed bent upon promoting the happiness of the young people gathered together.

Mr. and Mrs. Bronson, the school teachers, seemed a host in themselves; then there were two colored men from the store to do duty as waiters and dish-washers. At one o'clock the feast was spread; crisp brown turkeys, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, white and brown bread, mince and pumpkin pie, plum pudding and coffee, and several immense pyramids of fruit. How it made the eyes of the youngsters sparkle!

There were two long tables, one for the boys, at either end of which presided Mr. and Mrs. Bronson. At the other table were the invited guests. There was no lack of jokes and stories among the lads, and appreciative laughter from their relatives, the guests.

About five o'clock, when the games were in prog-

ress which always followed the Christmas dinner, Mr. Heartwell entered. Instantly there was a cry of "Merry Christmas" from scores of throats, and one youngster, more bold than the rest, called out, "Three cheers for our employer!" No second invitation was needed and a rousing cheer rent the air. Mr. Heartwell bowed and beamed upon the assemblage as he replied, "You seem to be having a Merry Christmas, so I will wish you all a glad and prosperous New Year." Then looking about he discovered a vacant seat next to Jerry, who sat with his mother and Linnet, watching the games and listening to the clatter of tongues. "Well, my boy," he said, addressing Jerry, "how is your patient getting on?"

"Do you mean Dick, sir? I think he is your patient, but he can speak for himself; he is around quite lively and as happy as a clam at high tide. Mr. Heartwell, I want to thank you for this elegant present," and Jerry drew from his pocket the new purse. "It's a good deal nicer than the old one, but this—here he drew out the old pocketbook—"has brought me some good luck and I think a deal of it," as he turned it over the two silver initials "J. I." struck Mr. Heartwell's eyes, and almost snatching it from the lad he asked hastily, "Jerry, where did you get this?"

"I found it over a year ago down by Fulton bridge, sir."

"Was there any thing in it?"

"Yes, sir; five dollars—two bills, and a silver piece."

"Nothing more, are you sure?"

"I believe there is a piece of paper with some writing on it in one of the pockets; I'll see," and Jerry took the purse, and after a little search drew forth a

piece of yellow paper. Mr. Heartwell eagerly seized it and ran his eye over the bit of writing. "Ah! this is indeed good fortune! Jerry, my boy, that purse belongs to me!"

"What, sir?"

"This is my purse, and one of the most sacred of gifts; it must have been stolen and dropped by the thief; I advertised for it, and felt very sorry over the loss; I carried it only occasionally as I wished to preserve it."

"Well, I'm glad I found it and can give it back to you; but where is the other letter?" queried Jerry. Mrs. Stubleton sat listening though taking no part in the conversation, and Mr. Heartwell continued—

"When that purse was given to me I had no other initials than those two. When my father and mother died I was adopted by an old friend and schoolmate of my father's. I had no brothers, and no relatives living unless a sister, who had left home some years previous. Having married against my father's wishes; she gave us no clue to her whereabouts, and after much searching we gave her up as dead." Mr. Heartwell sighed profoundly. Mrs. Stubleton knew not why, but she was all of a tremble as she listened for the conclusion of this story. After a few moments of silence Jerry asked, "Didn't Mr. Heartwell, the gentleman who adopted you, have any boys of his own?"

"No; he married, but had no children; he always took a fatherly interest in me and seemed to love me as his own. So I became Jerome Irving Heartwell." A cry from his mother caused Jerry to spring to his feet.

CHAPTER XV.

"MOTHER! what is it?" cried Jerry in a frightened tone, for his mother was as white as death, and holding her hand to her heart as though pressed for breath. "Oh, she's dying! she's dying!" and the poor lad, whose heart was so full of love for his mother, turned almost as pale as she, for he had never seen one in a faint, and thought it must be death.

"No, no, dear;" she whispered, coming to, and making an effort to recover herself without exciting attention, "I am all right now." Then seeing Mr. Heartwell's anxious face she smiled and asked, "Did you have a sister Catherine?"

"I did madam—dear, merry Kate, I have searched for her far and near; do you know aught of her?"

"Jerome, my brother, I *am your long-lost sister!*"

"God be praised!" he joyously exclaimed and clasped her fondly in his arms. Then holding her off from him he said: "How you have changed, dear Kate; no wonder I did not know you; but it is many years since we parted, and I, too, have grown old; but now we will grow young once more, and Jerry, my boy, there was a reason for my warm attachment for you. Kindred blood flows in our veins." Then Mrs. Stubleton took Linnet by the hand and led her to her brother.

"Jerome, you have not met my daughter—my dear companion; although she is sightless, she is the bird that charms our cares away by her warbling. Linnet, this is your new-found Uncle Jerome, Jerry's

employer," and then followed explanations and congratulations.

"I must take you home and have a long talk with you, Kate; but first I must keep an appointment."

"Wait a few minutes, Mr. Heartwell—Uncle, I mean," proudly said Jerry, "and you shall hear some fine music." And off ran the happy boy for the Italian and his harp. He was soon back again, and then they all listened to some ravishing music, but when Linnet sang there was a perfect rain of applause, and her Uncle exclaimed with much warmth: "Why, Kate, that child has a fortune in her voice! Who has been her instructor, and how is it she has not been heard of? Her voice is marvelous."

"Ah, yes; that is what I say," delightedly chimed in her teacher, "but her mother too tender and the young lady too delicate."

Here there was an interruption in the shape of Dr. Young, who came to take Linnet home as per agreement. When he saw Mr. Heartwell, he exclaimed: "Why, this is an unexpected pleasure! I have not met you since setting you on your feet after that sprained ankle."

"Well, that's not my fault; you should take a little more interest in your patient's welfare," rejoined Mr. Heartwell.

"My patients are not all blessed with your good health, Mr. Heartwell, or I should have time to call upon my friends; I am here now to take charge of one of them," and he tenderly assisted Linnet with her wraps, and bidding them all adieu departed as bustling and busy as though he carried the world on his young shoulders.

"Mighty nice chap," said Mr. Heartwell as he looked after the departing couple. "Kate, are you ready? My cutter is here; let me take you home and I will leave Jerry to come with the young folks." Mrs. Stubleton was only too glad to leave the noisy bustling crowd and seek quiet and rest. How strange it all seemed and how intricate God's ways.

That evening the brother and sister sat together until far into the night. Twenty years ago she had fled with her dashing, handsome lover, and with her impetuous nature believed that heaven was opening for her a future so bright, as pictured by her lover, that only a little time would elapse ere her parents would forgive and recall her. Alas! she was so broken in spirit in less than three months after her marriage, that nothing would induce her to make known to her friends her humiliation; and her proud spirit endured in silence the abuse and disgrace of her intemperate and dissolute husband. Her father and mother were heart-broken over the loss of their only daughter, who, until this stranger came, had been the life and light of their home.

They only survived the cruel blow a few years, then, closely following each other, had left their son alone, and their parting injunction had been, "search for her until you find her and tell her we forgive her." Then a letter came from her father's old friend, who was abroad at the time of his classmate's death, the notice of which he had run across in one of the home papers, saying to Jerome, "I loved your father as a brother; and knowing he has left you but little of this world's goods, I want you to share my home and my wealth. I have watched you closely and know that your princi-

ples are above reproach. I am childless, and my wife joins me in my earnest desire to have you with us. I shall return within a month and we will expect our boy Jerome to join us directly. I want a successor, my boy, and I want none other than you."

This was the scrap of paper so sacredly guarded in the old pocket book. It is needless to add the boy became the adopted son and heir to the Heartwell estate, and at Mr. Heartwell, Sr.'s death, took charge of the business. Jerome had sought faithfully to carry out his parents' desire concerning the erring daughter and sister, but her husband having taken an assumed name in order to escape punishment for some offense against the law, he was thrown off the track completely.

Jerome's foster father had been a very benevolent man, and in his parting words had adjured his adopted son to make a right use of his means, to be an example worthy every professing Christian; to be a friend to the poor and thereby be able to give a good account of his stewardship when at the bar of justice. We know how faithfully he was carrying out his father's wishes.

Before Mr. Heartwell bade adieu to his sister it was all arranged. She was to come and be a mother to his little daughter, who had been motherless for two years, and who was just at an age to need counsel and gentle guidance from some womanly heart. Jerry, of course, was to be put in school, Linnet to get the best of medical advice, and, failing to recover her sight, was to be placed where every advantage for an education could be secured.

Thus ended that memorable Christmas day.

CHAPTER XVI.

A YEAR has passed away.

Mrs. Stubleton, now mistress of the Heartwell mansion, has greatly changed since want and care have vanished from her life. She is a very comely woman; her hair, tho' streaked with gray, lies in silky waves; her eyes have a mild and tender light, while her face and figure have become rounded and the wrinkles have almost departed. She is sitting in the library, dressed in a plain though rich black silk, a soft fall of lace about the throat and wrists. She is knitting at some pretty design of edge which is to border the girls' woolen skirts. Linnet sits near, idly thrumming the harp strings. Looking admiringly at her daughter, who is a fair, sweet picture in her pale blue cashmere with its elaborate white silk embroidery, a gift from her uncle, who has a passion for dainty tea gowns, and his own daughter being yet too young to don trails and watteau plaits, lavishes upon Linnet the lovely robes, Mrs. Stubleton says:

"How changed the dear boy will find us and how changed we shall find him after this year of absence."

"Yes," sighed Linnet, "Oh, if I could only look upon you and my dear brother; I never felt so much the longing to see, when our surroundings were all betokening poverty, but *now*, I can scarce control my desire." In her secret heart there was a longing also to look upon her own face, that she might see the

object of so much affection as expressed by those about her, and of one in particular who had become so near and dear; for Dr. Young still made his visits, and there was now a promise that he should claim Linnet as his bride when she reached her eighteenth birthday. In the meantime she was at an institution of learning and her receptive mind becoming filled with much valuable knowledge. But little hope was held out for the restoration of sight, for Linnet was born blind, and the defect was beyond the oculist's skill. She did not often repine or murmur at her sad fate, but at times an overpowering sense of her loss took possession of her and in secret she would give way to her bereavement. She would not depress others by complaints, and by continually striving to master herself, she conquered her rebellion to such an extent as to be usually contented and happy. Her music was a passion with her. Her uncle never tired of her delicious voice, and no matter how tired or weary he seemed, he always declared himself rested and refreshed.

Linnet never had to be urged to play, and that gave an additional charm to her music; for it seemed always a delight for her as well as those she sang for.

"My darling, God only knows how I have longed and prayed for your sight; but if it is His will that your dear eyes remain blind to all the beautiful things in nature, try and remember that you are spared many very sad sights as well, and try not to repine over the inevitable. I know, dearest, you do try, and you do succeed, for every good and pure purpose of ours brings its reward. You are loved as few are loved, and are spared a thousand shafts that would

wound were you like others, thrown more in society, or on the world."

"Yes, dearest, it is all over; you always bring the sunshine back to my heart with your good logic and sweet counsel," and kissing her mother affectionately, the young girl renewed the interrupted subject of Jerry's home-coming. His uncle had placed him at a military academy where discipline and thorough drilling would counteract the many lax habits of the lad induced by the free and careless life he had led.

He had become somewhat stoop-shouldered from his various street occupations, and his uncle knew there was no better place than a military school, where, besides the drill, the boys were obliged to attend regular gymnastic exercises. Jerry had been gone nine months, and the family were eagerly expecting him for the holiday vacation. No one knew how lonely Mrs. Stubleton's heart had been for the first few weeks of Jerry's absence. He had always been such a companion to his mother and Linnet. The latter now had some one else to bear her company and beguile the hours, so the loss had come doubly heavy upon the mother. Mrs. Stubleton never complained, however; she believed in keeping a cheerful heart and a smiling face for those about her, and her children had profited by her wise example, making a trio of congenial spirits, desirable in any and every home; for who does not prefer a light heart and a cheery face to one of sadness and complaining?

"I wonder if he will be the same bright, impulsive boy; dear me! how slow the time goes when one is waiting the arrival of long-absent ones," said Linnet,

as she threw herself upon the lounge, and stretching out her slippered feet, and clasping her white and shapely hands over her head, prepared to take it easy until the return of the carriage which had gone to fetch her brother from the station.

An hour passed.

"What can be detaining them? I hope not snow-bound, or accident," anxiously said Mrs. Stubleton going to the window and looking out into the wintry world. "Ah! there comes the carriage."

Up sprang Linnet and soon joined her mother at the door, ready to embrace the soldier boy. The coachman drove in and past the door toward the stables without stopping.

"Ah, the rascal! he's trying to fool us," laughed Mrs. Stubleton; but when the minutes crept along she could bear it no longer and rang for a servant to find out by James where he had left the lad.

He returned, looking serious as he said: "An accident, ma'am, somewhere, not far out of the city, and can't tell when the train will arrive."

Mr. Heartwell had gone to meet him, but had stopped at the store on his way home, not caring to break such news to his sister.

Amy came dancing in, all radiant with a span new gown—"just for the occasion," she said. "Where is he? I thought I was going to dazzle the young cadet with all this red and gold," brightly rattled the young miss, and it is fair to believe she would have dazzled him, for her dusky beauty was well set off by this dark cardinal silk with its trimming of gold braid. Her father loved bright home dresses; "birds of gay

plumage," he said, and the young people were very glad to gratify him.

The year of black dresses for his little girl, after her mother's death, seemed so out of harmony with her nature, and with her childhood, that he allowed her to wear them only so long as a foolish custom demanded.

When Mr. Heartwell came in a few moments later, he found a very impatient and anxious little circle.

"Only think, Jerome, two hours late, and heaven only knows what it may mean," almost groaned Mrs. Stubleton.

"I think there was nothing serious, 'a broken rail' was all we could get from the station keeper, and I am going to send James again."

Here there was a shutting of doors and a stamping of feet heard in the rear hall, and then in all the glory of blue uniform and shining brass buttons, the form of a young cadet stood in the open doorway making the military salute with all the deference due to his superior officers. "Jerry!" "Jerry!" "Jerry!" went the rounds as a grand rush was made for the belated and beloved boy, and such a hugging and kissing time! He finally emerged and feeling himself all over, said, with twinkling eyes and the rosiest face imaginable, for he had breasted the wintry air for three miles: "Well, by Jove! that's worse than being buried in a snow bank! Now excuse me and I'll doff this burden, for I have walked so fast my big coat has put me all in a perspiration," and he hauled off the great blue coat and displayed the regular uniform of grey with its numerous buttons and its funny little short-waisted short-tailed coat.

"Oh, how tall and how straight he has grown, Auntie, and int't he killing!" admiringly said Amy.

"Did you have to walk from the station, dear?" tenderly inquired his mother.

"From the station! Well! I walked from the breakdown, three miles out of the city. Do you s'pose I could wait for them to patch up a broken rail? No sir-ee! I knew there was one heart full of tears, and several others full of sighs, and so I just ordered 'home on the double quick,' and about a dozen of us obeyed straightway. We had to do some wading through drifts, but that's a part of a soldier's life."

"Well, my boy," at length said Uncle Jerome, "I would like to know what those stripes are doing on your sleeve, they don't belong to a private."

"Oh, I earned those by good conduct and good recitations; I am a *Corporal*, sir! I wanted to surprise you, and repay you for some of your generosity to me, and I couldn't think of any better way."

"God bless you, boy! you are right; nothing could gratify me more." And his fond uncle actually kissed the big fellow!

Jerry blushed and stammered something about "not deserving so much credit for doing his duty."

"Yes, you do, you darling," and Linnet put her arms about his neck, and then fell to counting the buttons that decorated his coat front. "How fine you must look," and her soft fingers smoothed his face and brushed his hair from his forehead. He drew her very affectionately toward him and whispered "How's my big brother-in-law, that is to be?"

"Better, and dearer and kinder every day." She whispered back.

"Just what I expected; are his wings beginning to sprout?" teasingly laughed the brother.

"I am afraid lest they may be," she seriously replied.

"By George! I can eat a roast elephant; isn't it time for grub? I haven't had a mouthful for an age, and my tramp has made me as hungry as a wolf."

"Of course it has; order supper a little earlier Kate, the boy must be ravenous."

"By the way, Amy, I have a friend who is going to call around to-morrow evening to see me—so he says—but he was so struck on that photo of yours that I don't believe he has a thought of coming for any other purpose than to see the original."

"Oh, how romantic; what does *he* look like?"

"Here is his phiz, isn't he a dandy?" and Jerry drew from his pocket the picture of his room-mate.

"Oh, this is Tom Walters that you write so much about, is it? he is rather good looking, lots of character in his face, don't you think so, papa?" And as she presented the picture for his inspection, Jerry said:

"Yes, there is lots of it, and in his hair, too."

"What do you mean by that, coz?"

"Why, I mean that his hair is a beautiful mahogany; and that style is supposed to possess some peculiar traits; isn't it, mother?"

"Well, it has been said that the temper partakes of the same color, I believe; red hair, fiery temper. You ought to know, you have had him for a room-mate long enough to learn something of his good and bad qualities."

"He's a tramp! got lots of pluck, and there isn't a

chap that dares impose on him: he's a general favorite among the boys; plays the banjo, and sings like a lark."

"O, I know *I* shall like him," exclaimed Linnet. "He can't be bad, if his soul is full of music."

Here the supper bell rang, and Jerry sprang to his feet and shot through the door-way.

"Just like a boy," laughed his uncle. "It carries me back to my own young days."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE day following, as Jerry and Amy were flying along in the cutter over the crisp snow they passed the place of the runaway.

"Do you remember this spot?" asked Amy.

"Shall I ever forget it?" emphatically replied her cousin. "How little we thought then that I should be sitting beside you, spinning along in my own sleigh, with the fleetest nag in the country. I tell you, Amy, there isn't a happier or more fortunate boy in the wide world than I, and I'll make a man that uncle will not be ashamed of, if I live."

"I am sure of it, for you have the right sort of grit, coz. I'll never forget how you looked when you stood waiting in the road with your shovel uplifted. I just expected to see you knocked down and trampled to death; but you never flinched and your eyes just blazed with excitement. I was dumb with fear and I couldn't move. I wanted to jump out, but it's well I didn't and, by the way, did you ever know how James used strategy to find out your name?"

And then she told him the ruse that had been the means of learning his name and address.

"I'll be even with him; but bless him, he couldn't help it; the thought was put into his head by God, and it was the beginning of the clue to our relationship." So they rattled on until they returned home, Amy declaring her toes were too numb to go any further, and Jerry, having in view another pleasure,

did not object. He whirled away and was not long in reaching the home of his old friend Mag. When he was ushered in, she stood for a moment transfixed by his elegance; hardly recognizing her shabby boy friend of the past.

"Its myself, Maggie," he laughed; "hustle on your cloak and hood and come out for a spin; I don't dare leave Puss long, she don't like standing."

Ah! what a treat to Mag, and how their tongues did run.

As they neared her home again, Jerry, said: "I have a message from my mother to you; she wants you to come and do some plain sewing for her, if you can be spared from home."

"O, I'd like to come—if I can suit her," she added more soberly.

"Of course you can; mother has seen your work and thinks you are a bang-up seamstress."

"What a way to praise; well, when does she want me? I will ask auntie; now that grandma is no longer living, we could shut up the house when auntie has to go."

"Well, she wants you right away; has some sewing to be done for a poor family before Christmas; run in, I'll wait for your answer, and if you can come I'll drive around for you."

After a few minutes delay she came forth quite radiant, and nodding her head said: "Yes, I can come—thank you ever so much for such a glorious ride." And with a brief good-bye, he was off.

"Mag would be a beauty if she was dressed up in good clothes, and she's as bright a girl as you'll find anywhere. Mother says it will give the girl a glimpse

of something brighter than she has known to get out of that horrid street, and its mighty kind of mother to think of it." Thus mused Jerry as he turned homeward.

"Hello! Tom, just in the nick of time; hop in and I'll take you up, going up our way?"

And overtaking his room-mate, Jerry insisted upon taking him up to the house for tea.

"Its rather cheeky, isn't it, Jerry, to take tea at a first call?"

"*Nah!* don't put on any dudish airs, comrade, we're not that sort of people. My uncle scorns society manners; he says there is neither heart nor soul in fashion, and I'm with him."

"So I say. How's your cousin?"

"Lovely as ever—Tom, hold these lines a minute quick!" and before Tom could utter a protest, out hopped Jerry and was running after a man who had passed an old woman carrying a basket of oranges and bananas, and had deliberately slipped his arm through the handle and twisted it from her grasp and was walking on as unconcerned as though he was the proprietor and nobody dare gainsay it. The old woman was wringing her hands and looking about vainly for help. No one seemed to heed her, and the busy crowd passed on, each intent on his or her own business. Jerry had seen the whole affair, and snatching his whip hurried after the man. He came up to him and grasping him by the shoulder exclaimed as gruffly as possible: "You are my prisoner; surrender!" The man looked over his shoulder and seeing the brass buttons and blue coat, besides feeling a rap of the butt end of the whip, took

it for granted the police was upon him and yielding his booty made off on a keen run.

Jerry couldn't help laughing outright, and as the old woman came up, he handed her the basket, saying: "Hold on a little tighter next time, my good woman, a policeman may not be so handy, always."

She thanked him with tears in her eyes, and tried to press some of the fruit on him; he took a couple of bananas and slipped a dime into her hand, then started for his friend, who was nowhere to be seen. "By George! he's playing the sharper's game on me, I verily believe;" and then he concluded to take it leisurely and see what would turn up; so he turned the next corner leading homeward, and tried to distinguish his own among the many vehicles along the street.

"Hold on!" came from behind him, and turning he saw Tom flying up the street. "Whew! I've had a chase, but I did it."

"Did what?" asked Jerry.

"Why, I saw your man escape you, and I just gave chase and as luck would have it, passed a blue-coat and sighted your man, who was running down an alley, and got the cop on his track, and bade the old woman follow up and tell her story, and I guess the scamp will get his deserts."

"Bully for you! I thought you had left the country with my horse and cutter."

"Would if I had thought of it; she's a beauty, and how she can skim. Is she yours?"

"Yes; uncle gave her to me for a Christmas present—a little premature, but, he said, so I could have the fun while the snow and the vacation lasted."

"Well, I am to have a rifle, father says; I have been crazy for one, but mother is so afraid I'll maim myself that she's just unhappy over it—but pop says its the only way to learn."

A happy evening was spent. Tom was prevailed upon to sing, and his voice was full of rich promise, though now a little crude and unsteady. Amy in her pink cashmere, and white satin trimmings looked far prettier than her picture, and Tom was quite captivated. He was sixteen, and what boy at that age has not had some heart flutterings over a pretty girl? Amy was very fond of chess, that being a favorite game of her father's. And Tom, likewise being somewhat skilled in the intricacies of the game, they decided to try their hands. Mr. Heartwell sat reading his paper, but soon the game drew his attention, and unknown to the young people, he watched them with growing interest, for they played very skilfully for amateurs. Tom was acting on the defensive; Amy's men were marching on and gradually surrounding the enemy's queen; a little pawn that was acting guard to his king, who protected the queen, was captured by a gallant knight whom Tom had for the moment forgotten, then hurriedly moving his king out of check, the poor queen was left exposed, and an innocent-looking bishop took possession of her.

"Ah, that's too bad!" cried Mr. Heartwell, which startled the young people, and Tom, being somewhat embarrassed over his foolish losses, made blunder after blunder until Amy got a checkmate, and with a red face and embarrassed manner Tom acknowledged himself whipped.

"Never mind, your gallantry must have permitted

that, anyway," said Mr. Heartwell, trying to relieve the lad's very apparent chagrin. "You must come and try again before you leave for school."

This was indeed comforting, and Tom began to feel that after all it was not so hard to be routed by a rosebud of a girl.

"Thank you, sir; I give Miss Amy all the credit; I didn't yield willingly." And Mr. Heartwell liked the boy for his candor. Some, less conscientious, would have allowed the assumption that the game was yielded through chivalry.

Dr. Young and Linnet were absorbed in music at the other end of the room. Jerry was quietly visiting with his mother, telling her of some of his school discipline, and comrades. It was a cosy homelike picture; the cheerful grate-fire sent its glow over the room, while the soft light from the colored globes of the chandelier gave a subdued air of refinement: bright flowers perfumed the room, and on every face was a look of serene content. Would that every home picture presented as happy a scene. In this, every member strove to forget self; therein lay the whole secret of its harmony and peace.

"Mother," said Jerry, after Tom had bid them all good night, and he had resumed his seat by her side, "what is the programme for a week from to-morrow? We ought to commemorate it in some small way, for only think what it has brought us--last Christmas we lived in a hovel, and hardly had enough to keep body and soul together: now we live in a palace and have no want ungratified."

"I feel just so, dear, and I have been very busy fitting out several poor families with good winter cloth-

ing; that is why I want Maggie's help, and I shall take her with me on some of my errands of mercy. She is so bright and light-hearted she can cheer up some of the sick and sad. The little school for the wee tots is in a flourishing condition, and I can see a great improvement in the homes where the children belong; good counsel, aided by some of life's comforts, is slowly but surely bringing about a better influence, and the houses wear a cleaner, more civilized appearance. I want Maggie after the holidays to enter as one of the teachers. Would she like it, do you think?"

"I guess so. She's so fond of little kids, and would just be in her element. Nice girl, Mag is."

"Yes," smiled his mother; "I believe I have heard that remarked before on several occasions."

Jerry looked a little confused, but smiled to himself, and sat gazing into the glowing coals.

"You are to go for her early in the morning, dear; don't forget it."

"Oh no, I'll not forget it." And he kissed his mother and Linnet good night and went whistling to bed.

"His liking for the girl doesn't seem to abate; it will do no harm to give her some advantages, at any rate," mused Mrs. Stubleton.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"HERE I am, Mrs. Stubleton, ready for business," cheerily cried Mag as she alighted from the cutter, and was received by her friend and employer.

"Very well, my dear, we have enough to do to keep us all busy until Christmas, so we will go right up to the sewing-room, where you can warm yourself while I show you the work I have cut out."

As they proceeded through the hall and up the stairs, Mag's eyes roved about in wondering admiration. She had never seen anything of elegance, and the refining influences of wealthy, cultured homes was to make a deep impression upon her susceptible nature. She was naturally modest and sensitive, and these qualities, combined with keen intuition, rapidly develop character.

Her neatly-fitting dress of dark blue wool, relieved by a white muslin tie and a spotless white apron, made her look very attractive and homelike; in fact Mag was a girl to shine in the home circle, but not in society, no matter what her means might be to further such a position. Mrs. Stubleton found her very apt, and the two passed the morning hours in congenial work and conversation.

During a pause, Mrs. Stubleton said to her, "we know you by no other name than Mag; what is your real name?"

"My real name is Margery Dexter White."

Mrs. Stubleton gave a start of surprise. "Your

mother's maiden name was Dexter?" she quickly asked.

"Yes'm; I was named for her."

"Why my child, I knew your mother well; in fact I owe my life to her!"

"Why, Mrs. Stubleton, tell me how?"

"Well, well; and you are dear Margery Dexter's child. Your mother was a school teacher at the time I became acquainted with her. We had adjoining rooms in a boarding house in the city of Buffalo.

"Yes, yes; auntie has told me that," interrupted Mag.

"One night my husband had not returned; I had sat up waiting for him until a late hour, but finally concluded to retire, being in a delicate state of health—it was before my Linnet's birth. I soon fell into a profound sleep, and it must have been near three o'clock in the morning when the cry of 'fire' roused me. I sprang up in a dazed condition and ran hither and thither but unable for a time to find the door. Hastily throwing on my cloak, I at length stumbled against the door, and on opening it found the passage full of dense smoke. I hastened on, however, almost stifled, but reached the winding stair, and holding to the railing felt my way, as I supposed, to the street door, but in the confusion of my senses and the darkness, went down a flight below and got into the basement. I opened a door, as I supposed, leading to the outer air, but stumbled over some great obstacle; feeling about, I discovered I was in the cellar, and in the coal bin! A horror seized me, for I felt unable to go further. I could hear the firemen and the noise outside, and then, through the floor, a glare of light

and next a deluge of water. I screamed aloud, I tore my hair, I felt my senses deserting me, and thought my hour had come. I breathed a prayer and yielded to my awful fate."

During this recital, Mag sat in a dumb fascination.

"I knew nothing more until I awoke in your mother's arms."

"How did it happen?" eagerly asked Mag, who could not bear to have a pause at so critical a period. She must know of this miraculous escape, and how her mother was interested in it.

"Well, it was weeks before I knew how I was saved. I was in a semi-delirious state, during which time my child was born; and do you wonder she was sightless? It was only by the most careful nursing that either I or the babe lived, and your mother and her people were more than kind. How many, many times I have thought of them and longed in my inmost soul to repay them in some measure for their care and goodness to me and mine. God has given me the opportunity, dear Margery—for hereafter I shall call you so. What joy it will be to have you near, and to be of service to you."

"O, don't speak of that, dear Mrs. Stubleton, but tell me how mother saved you."

"O, of course you want to know, dear. Well, it seems she had rapped and called at my door, but finding it bolted, and unable to make me respond, had hurried from the increasing smoke, and reaching the sidewalk had bade a fireman hasten to my rescue. He soon scaled the ladder and breaking my window found the room empty, I had left it a few moments after your mother's flight; the fireman had gone into

an adjoining room and searched; by that time he lost track of me. Having stationed her sister at one door, and herself at the other, your mother watched for my appearance, but not seeing me she pleaded with others to search inside, and at length one brave fellow more persevering than the rest, and thinking it possible I might have gone a flight too far, found me in a pool of water on the cellar floor; to all appearances dead. He carried me out, and your mother led the way to a friend's house, where everything was done for my restoration. When I recovered health and strength, I came with my husband and child to New York, where he had found a position, but which brought a very small income, and I was obliged to use the strictest economy in order to have the necessities of life. For a while I kept up a correspondence with your mother, but moving about from place to place I finally lost trace of her, though I have never ceased to love and think of her."

"What a thrilling story, and how strange that we should be brought together after all these years," said Margery.

Jerry came in just as his mother uttered "Margery," beginning some question concerning the work in hand.

"Hello! got a tail to the comet, eh?"

"What do you mean, my son."

"O, I beg pardon; I was only wondering where you had coined the new name; its a vast deal improved I must say; Margery Daw,—is that it?"

"O, Jerry! such a revelation as I have been listening to. May I tell him Mrs. Stubleton?"

"After lunch, dear; the bell is ringing, and Amy

and Linnet will want to hear as well as the boy." Their flushed faces, and their bright eyes spoke of something very unusual, and Jerry was quite excited over the coming disclosure.

At the table he said, "Now, girls, eat hearty; there's something of great importance about to be divulged beneath this roof."

He succeeded in arousing their curiosity, and would not utter another word, bidding them show patience as he was doing. It is safe to say the noon meal was more rapidly disposed of than usual, and the little group adjourned to the pleasant little sewing-room, where there was a clamor for the news.

"You all know the story of my escape from a death by cremation; and how I owe my life to a young girl named Margery Dexter. I have all my life yearned to repay her in some small measure for her noble efforts on that terrible night. I can never do aught for *her*, for I have this morning learned that she died years ago, leaving one child, a daughter; that daughter we now have with us. Mag, is no more; but our Margery will be a precious link binding us to the dear departed whose memory shall ever be kept green in our hearts."

When Mrs. Stubleton had finished, Jerry gave a long whistle and grasped Margery's hand, saying, "Shake, old girl; we're firmer friends than ever."

Linnet with a voice full of emotion, said, "Come here, Margery, let me kiss you for your mother—think, but for her, how much happiness I should have missed," and the two fondly embraced each other.

When Mr. Heartwell learned of the young girl's identity, his big heart immediately expanded, and he

proposed giving her school advantages and making a lady of her.

"All in good time," replied his sister. "You can't change a sunflower into a daisy all in a twinkling, let me manage it," and her brother having great confidence, readily assented to his sister's proposition.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE Christmas festivities were at their height. All over the land family circles were united after months of absence, and peace and good will seemed to reign everywhere.

At Mr. Heartwell's family gathering Margery and her aunt were the only guests. Miss Dexter, a maiden lady of about forty, was one of those serene, quiet bodies who are never ill at ease, no matter where they may be placed. She was also a very intelligent woman, and could converse with a simple grace, very becoming to any lady, until she loses her argument and her head with it, as so many of her sex are prone to do. She was dressed in a gray stuff gown, and wore a white muslin kerchief crossed over her bosom, giving her a quaint, Quaker-like appearance. She was a very comely woman; with blue eyes, a fair, rosy complexion, and hair slightly gray. Margery declared "she was as like her mother as two pins, judging from her mother's portrait."

"Yes, I see the same eyes and complexion, and many expressions that remind me of your mother, as I remember her," said Mrs. Stubleton.

"Now my good people, I have a surprise in store for you," said Mr. Heartwell, smiling around the groaning table.

"We are all eyes and ears, papa," cried Amy—

"Oh, no," interrupted Jerry, "there's a good deal of mouth, judging from the way provisions are disappearing."

"I want you all to go with me to chapel service this evening, and hear our friend Richard give his views on religion."

"Who is Richard, and where is the chapel?" asked Linnet.

"Richard is Dick, one of my drivers; the boy has really become a convert, since his accident. I give 'Sister Martha' the credit, although he claims that Jerry first set him to thinking on the subject, on the very day of the accident, and while he was laid up he had much time to ponder, and Sister Martha was always ready and willing to answer his questions; then, when he became able he attended service regularly, and we have had some stirring preachers at the school, which I call the chapel when used for church purposes; so the boy, being favorably inclined, found just what he needed, and he has expressed a desire to study for the ministry."

"*W-h-e-w!!* Well, that takes my breath away! and I never knew a word of it till this instant. How has he kept it so quiet?" said Jerry. They all expressed much surprise and pleasure, for Dick was a staunch-hearted fellow, and a favorite with his employer and comrades.

"You know he is rather diffident, and a silent sort of a chap at all times, but he is so much in earnest that he has consented to speak before an audience to-day. I presume it will be an awkward attempt, but his readiness to show his colors is very commendable."

"Poor fellow," said Mrs. Stubleton; "he won't want to see us there; he will be so much more embarrassed."

"No, I think not; and there might be some sneering or unkind remarks if there is not some one to show

authority and respect for the lad's position. I think we can offer him words of encouragement, and our example will do much toward gaining the good will and opinion of the class of people whom he will address."

"Well said, papa mine; you always know just how to manage everybody and everything," confidently asserted his young daughter.

Jerry looked with admiring eyes at his cousin Amy, and said, "Coz, if that young dude comes around to-night, there'll be no hope for him."

"I don't know any dudes; if you mean your friend Tom Walters, I think you are very disrespectful and unkind, for he is anything but a fop. I call him a very sensible, intelligent boy."

"Bravo; my cousin Amy! I am 'sot on' most completely. If Tom were only here, he would be much encouraged at the words of his fair defender."

"I think you teasing boys are just horrid, so I do," said Amy with a flushed face.

"Now I will only say in conclusion, what I started to say in the beginning, that I think you look more charming in that white flannel dress than anything I ever saw you wear. There, now, aren't you feeling the coals of fire singeing your top-knot?"

"Well, I'll forgive you, and we'll let the subject drop," quietly returned Amy.

"Never mind, daughter," laughed Mr. Heartwell, "if we were so inclined we might play tit-for-tat, but we'll be merciful and spare his blushes to-day," and her father looked slyly at Jerry, whose eyes followed his uncle's until they rested on Margery's face, just then bent over her plate apparently very intent upon its

contents. Amy looked at her cousin and was rewarded by seeing the tell-tale blood mount to his cheek ; but no word was uttered by either, a smile passing around among those who had heard the bantering. Miss Dexter and Mrs. Stubleton were busily engaged in discussing some school project for the benefit of very young children of the poor in Miss Dexter's neighborhood.

"Yes," she was saying, "I would be glad to give my time to the training and instruction of such a class, and on your generous terms could do better than with my sewing, which is very confining and not at all lucrative. Maggie would be in her element in instructing the little ones, and I in mine, teaching the older ones sewing and cooking. Yes, it would do unbounded good: neatness, order, and good, substantial, well-cooked food would revolutionize the poor man's home."

"You are right, Miss Dexter, and I think I have found in you just the woman I have been searching for. We will start the ball rolling, and who can say where it will fetch up?"

"Yes, yes," cried Mr. Heartwell ; "start the ball and it will roll on toward the education of the poor, and therein lies their salvation."

"And their happiness, content, and prosperity," added his sister.

"Exactly ; that is my meaning," he returned.

When they entered the chapel some hours later, the little party found a very merry gathering. The dinner had been disposed of, and now the various games were in progress. One of the older boys had brought his violin and was tuning up preparatory to forming a dancing set. Jerry's brass buttons put an end to every-

thing for the time being and the youngsters were lost in admiration.

"Why it's *Jerry*!" cried Dick, and grasped his hand with a grip that said plainly, "I'm glad to see you, old boy!" Then a cheer for Mr. Heartwell was followed by one as hearty for his nephew, which quite discomposed that young gentleman for a few moments.

"Go on with your dancing and your games, we have come to take part," good naturedly said Mr. Heartwell.

This pleased the company greatly, and when the young musician called out "choose yer partners fer a cottillion," Mr. Heartwell gallantly offered his arm to Miss Dexter, who gracefully and laughingly accepted, saying, "Now, I have not indulged in a pigeon wing in over fifteen years, so you must pardon all awkward steps."

"O, we will be content with less than a pigeon wing; for I, too, have outgrown my grace and agility. Jerry, or Corporal, I s'pose I should say, and would if you had a more euphonious name to buckle it to, but that *Stubleton* sticks in my throat, and I'll have to adopt you in order to get rid of it. Linnet will find a way to shed it pretty soon, and then I'm going to take measures to give you a name you can respect, my boy."

This was all said quietly to the boy who stood beside his uncle, but whose eye brightened as he replied, "Well, I'm perfectly willing; but how about mother? I'm not going to ignore her, even if I do despise the name," rather warmly replied Jerry.

"We'll arrange that; she will be none the less your mother, my boy, for any change in a name; and you

can offer the woman you marry a name that bears no stigma then. There, now run and get Margery, and find some partners for your mother and Amy."

Away ran Corporal Stubleton, and soon had Mr. Richard Browning and Amy opposite his Uncle and Miss Dexter. He then bowed low to his mother, and asked for the pleasure. She laughed and shook her head.

"No, no; I shall enjoy the blunders of the rest of you instead of making any myself. Go and get Margery"—for Mrs. Stubleton preferred her own pronunciation of the name she had substituted for Maggie—"she looks as though she could not keep still while those exquisite strains are filling the air."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the boy, "those heavenly strains."

Then, with three sets, the room was full and they began in downright earnest. Some of the fathers and mothers joined in with faces as serious as though they were joining a funeral procession; but in a little while as their blood warmed to the occasion they became as animated and as frisky as the younger members of the party: and when Dick saw his mother sweep by, in an "All promenade," clasping hands with one of Mr. Heartwell's book-keepers—an old bachelor as bald as a new-born babe, and who always wore a shabby-genteel suit of black, and a never-failing button-hole bouquet—he was so convulsed with laughter that he forgot his partner, who went sailing away on her own responsibility, and made him very much ashamed of his rudeness: he explained to her when the opportunity occurred, and she readily forgave him. When the figure was completed, Mr. Heartwell pro-

posed a game of blindman's buff for the younger ones, while the older ones rested and recruited for another dance. And he mopped his florid face and panted like one well spent. His sister laughed heartily, and said, "It was better than a play."

"More work than I've done in many a day, Kate, but how these people enjoy it, and how much better this, than fashionable sham and formality."

At length the festivities were ended, and then Mr. Heartwell, after a brief talk to the boys and their parents, asked Richard Browning to take his place for the evening and conduct the closing exercises.

CHAPTER XX.

THERE was a stir and a looking from one to another in an interrogative sort of way, as Dick, with a good deal of embarrassment, ascended the little platform containing the reading desk. Mr. Heartwell sat down behind the speaker, and faced the little assembly, knowing his presence would command the respect due to the subject in hand, as well as encourage his protégé. Dick began a little nervously, but making a brave effort, succeeded in finding voice to utter some of his thoughts.

“I suppose you are surprised to see me here—that is, my fellow-workmen—but you all know how a year ago I was disabled for several weeks. Some of you, but not all, know that if it hadn’t been for Mr. Heartwell I would have been on crutches for the rest of my life: and when he had done so much for me I thought it was my duty to do something for him. He always wanted me to come to chapel and take part in the Sunday School; but I never felt at home there, and in fact I didn’t like it, and didn’t much believe in such things. I had just been saying to Jerry Stubleton that I hadn’t any faith in Providence, when Providence interrupted me—at least that’s the way I look at it now—and when I was at the hospital I had a nurse who was so near an angel that I couldn’t help but have better thoughts and feelings; and when I got able, I made a vow to go regularly to church and to Sunday School, and I’ve heard some sermons that

would stir the heart of a barbarian into making good resolutions. Well, the upshot of it all was, that I began to be awake to my faults, and I saw that I had lots to be thankful for, and the desire came to me to put in my oar, and paddle around among the poor shipwrecked sinners and help them get ashore. That's about all there is to say, Mr. Heartwell, I guess." And amid a murmur of applause Dick went and sat down by his mother, who took his big brown hand and patted it tenderly; for she, too, had been led to see and believe.

Then Mr. Heartwell stood up and said: "Friends, I am most happy to say that our young friend is about to begin a course of study for the ministry. I am sure he will succeed; and although I am sorry to lose his faithful services, yet I gladly resign him to the new life he has chosen, and will watch with growing interest his future career. I hope at our next annual reunion to have a lecture from him, or if you will, a sermon." He then shook Dick warmly by the hand, and was followed by his sister and the others of the party. Jerry coming last and saying in his hearty way, "By George, Dick! that was a lucky accident after all. Who would have believed it! I wonder if it would have had the same effect upon me. Nothing would have pleased mother any better."

Then Dr. Young came for his Linnet, which was a signal for the breaking-up of the party, as the Heartwell family also bade good-night and departed.

These parties served as food for many pleasant home talks among the families who participated, and created a desire for a more frequent meeting of friends. This

was gratified by attending the Sunday services, and was just what Mr. Heartwell intended.

The day following, as Jerry was hastening along on his way to his friend's home, holding his head down to keep his hat on, and protect his face from the cutting wind that blew somewhat furiously, he ran against some one coming in an opposite direction and almost took the stranger off his feet.

"Look out where yer goin', boss," came from a familiar voice; and looking up Jerry beheld his old enemy and friend, *Jimmy*.

"Bless my stars! what luck; why Jim, where did you blow from?" Jimmy stared in open-mouthed wonder.

"Who are ye anyway, I took ye for a Police Officer with all yer brass buttons."

"Sure, and I'm Corporal Stubleton, at yer sarvice," and Jerry made the military salute.

"Holy mother! if it ain't Jerry Stub!" and standing off, Jimmy surveyed with astonishment and admiration his friend of other days.

"How are you, anyway? How's your mother, and what are you doing?" asked Jerry, not giving time for a reply between the questions.

"Well," said Jimmy, "I'll walk your way for a while, for I want to ask you a heap of things."

"You know my mother found her brother, Mr. Heartwell, the merchant, and now we all live together, and as he's got a notion of making a fine gentleman of me, I am at a military school for the present till I learn to carry myself properly, and then I 'spose I'll be packed off to college; that's the long

and short of my story since I saw you. What is your experience?"

"Well, its not so fine as your's, Jerry; since mother died—"

"What! is your mother dead?" interrupted Jerry.

"Yes, didn't you read about it? Well, she was sent out one night to the drug store to get some medicine for a sick woman, and—she never came back alive."

"Lord! what happened?" excitedly asked Jerry in a hushed tone.

"Well, it was that stormy awful night about two weeks ago; we don't know whether mother got benumbed or lost her way, or what, but she was found frozen to death in a doorway about a block from the Home." Jimmy's voice grew very unsteady; he pulled from his pocket a soiled and worn handkerchief, with which he blew his nose, the operation taking quite a while—for boys are all averse to showing their tender feelings to any save their mothers. Jerry was much moved, and having no words to offer, silently laid his arm across Jimmy's shoulder as they walked on. Then Jimmy continued: "I wasn't well that night and she wouldn't let me do the errand; said she needed the air, and it would do her good. She had the medicine in her pocket, so we knew she had been to the druggist's and was on her way back. After waiting a long time for her, one of the colored boys was sent after her, and then I started, but t'was no good. We sent to the police station and they sent out men. She was found next morning by a newsboy who leaves papers at the Home, and knew her. Poor mother! I'll never forget her last words."

When I said 'I would go for her,' she said 'You take care of yourself, me boy; you'll be all the better off if some ghost runs away with me; but I'm not afraid—only of one thing.' And when I said, 'That must be the devil,' she nodded her head and hurried away."

Jimmy was never told that his mother bought a bottle of whisky at the drug store. It was supposed that the old craving came upon her, and being chilled, tired and wet with the sleet, she drank heavily, and became either too dazed to pursue her way, or shame forbade her returning to her boy, and her patient. So the one enemy she feared did grapple and overcome the poor creature, and made a sorry ghost of her, causing the lad who discovered her to flee as though pursued by Tam O'Shanter's witches, he vowing "he saw a real, live ghost sitting on a doorstep," the snow coming toward morning having enveloped the woman in a spotless winding-sheet leaving only the ghastly outlines of her crouching form.

"Poor thing," murmured Jerry. "What are you doing now, Jimmy, and where are you stopping?"

"I am still at the Home; but I was looking for work when I ran across you."

"And lucky you did, my boy; there's a vacancy in my uncle's store, I am sure, and you'd be just the one to fill it. Here, I'll give you the address, and you come round this evening when my uncle will be at leisure," and taking a pencil and card Jerry wrote the street and number of Mr. Heartwell's residence, and handed it to the delighted boy. "Good bye, till then," he said, and ran up the steps leading to Tom Walters'.

"I don't know about a vacancy," he muttered, "but one must be made; poor boy, what a woe-begone look he had, as if he had no one to care for him in the wide world. Ah, he is in luck; when Uncle Jerome hears my story and his story, his big heart will do the handsome," and with an easy conscience Jerry greeted his chum, and the two descended to the billiard room, where the hours were passed until the lunch bell called them from their pleasant game.

In the afternoon they went skating and tobogganing, and had some rare enjoyment in the keen wintry air.

"Why didn't you ask your cousin Amy to come along, doesn't she like skating?"

"Well, Tom, to tell the truth I never thought of it. My sister, of course, never could go out with me and I s'pose I'm sort of heathenish about gallanting the girls. I'll tell you what I'll do; I'll ask Margery and Amy to come to-morrow afternoon; how does that strike you?"

"Strikes me very favorably, Corporal. No! hold on; botheration, I have an engagement with Jack Warner: promised to go rabbit hunting."

"O, by the way," interrupted Jerry, "did you get your rifle?"

"Indeed I did, and she's a beauty, I tell you. Say, Corporal, you come with us hunting. I'll go next day with you and the girls."

"All right, that's a fair exchange. I'm not much of a shot, but I'll go and try my luck anyway." So their plans were laid, and the following day the three boys took the train for one of the suburbs of the city, and started on their hunt.

"I feel like an Injun on the war path," said Jerry, as he awkwardly shouldered his small rifle. "I'm used to a musket instead of a plaything."

"Come, sir, no insinuations," replied Tom. "It's just like mine, and I'm sure it's big enough, and heavy enough to carry on a long tramp."

"O, I shall not growl over it; Uncle Jerome said it would kill all the rabbits I found, and that's all I ask of it."

"There are tracks now," cried Jack Warner, and with some excitement the three followed on. They trudged for about half a mile and then came to a fallen tree, where they lost the trail. "Shoot the luck!" dismally muttered Jack, "I was just getting the taste of that beast, and O, wasn't it delicious!"

The other two laughed heartily at his disappointment.

"If you never ate a rabbit by a camp fire in the woods, cooked by yourself, you have yet to get the best morsel you ever put into your mouth," continued Jack, who was something of a sportsman.

"Really, do you mean to cook a rabbit, if you catch one?" asked Jerry, who was a novice in this line of amusement.

"Yes sir-ee! There! look at that, a hole in the tree; and I'm blest if Mr. 'Rare-bit' isn't safely cuddled in among some dry leaves; get your rifles ready and when I rattle him out, go for him." Upon this, Tom and Jerry evinced some enthusiasm akin to their comrade, and with rifles in position prepared to do deadly work. "All ready," and Jack jumped upon the fallen monarch of the forest, and stamped vigorously until out came not one, but two, fine jack rabbits. Bang! bang!

went the guns, and away sped the frightened innocents. One left a track of blood, however, and thus encouraged the three boys hastened on, Jack leading, and thinking if he had had a chance at the fleeing victims, one at least would have been forever stilled, the other boys, Jerry and Tom, each taking the credit to himself of having at least wounded a rabbit, and feeling sure of pursuing to the death the poor creature. They came to a rail fence and hastily climbed over, but found the trail missing. "Bah! just our luck," said Jack, "but if he is not in a hole, we'll have him yet."

"Ah! methinks thou art here, sweet rare-bit," joyfully cried Tom, and reaching under a rail among some brush that was heaped up against the fence, he drew forth the dying animal.

"Too bad!" said Jerry, "hanged if I like such cruel sport. Let's go home and get something to eat, I'm on the point of starvation."

"We'll soon fix your stomach so it won't cry hunger," laughed Jack. "It does seem cruel, but great Scotland, Jerry, this is nothing to being a soldier, and shooting your fellow-men."

"I never would do that only in case of dire necessity," emphatically replied the tender-hearted boy. During this conversation the rabbit had breathed its last, and Jack had it ready for the spit in a jiffy. Tom and Jerry gathered the fagots, and soon the blaze began to cast its cheerful warmth over the scene, and the tired and chilled boys basked in its grateful heat; and when the fumes of the roasting rabbit greeted their nostrils, even Jerry's scruples were hushed, and they all partook of the delicate meat with keen relish. Jack had brought along the seasoning, and when the meal was

finished they agreed with him that never before had anything tasted so good.

"Now we are warm, and our hunger is satisfied, let's trudge on: I want to take a couple home, if possible," said Tom Walters. "Whew! there's a chap flying away, he must have heard my speech," and giving a whoop, up sprang Tom, and at the same time in some unaccountable way, became entangled in his rifle, which lay at his feet. In trying to extricate himself he accidentally struck the trigger against some offending obstacle, and the gun went off, and at the same time a cry from Jerry, as he leaped in the air, then fell in a heap, told the boys that some dreadful thing had happened.

CHAPTER XXI.

JERRY's first cry was one of pain, the next was a wrathful exclamation as he realized what had happened. "You great galloot! don't you know how to take care of your old shot gun? Nice fix you've got me in for the rest of vacation." Then seeing the look of horror and remorse on his friend's face, he relented enough to say, "'Twas an accident, of course, Tom, but what's a fellow to do?"

"The first thing is to stop that blood," said Jack, and he took his handkerchief, and binding a lump of snow to the wound, which was in the calf of the leg, he said, "Now, Tom, you and I have got to make a seat with our hands and get him to the cars as soon as possible, for that shot must be got out."

"Well! I'm the biggest fool out of Dudedom, and I could kick myself into next week, if it would undo the mischief."

His contrition was heartfelt; and Tom wore a very serious face all the journey homeward.

Jerry finally said, "Tom, don't look so solemn, I forgive you."

"I don't forgive myself though, by any means."

The wound became very painful before they reached the city, and Jerry's face became quite pale and drawn. He bade them call a cab as soon as they arrived at the station, and then ordered them to direct the driver to Dr. Young's office, as he did not wish

his mother to know anything of it until the bullet was extracted.

They found the doctor just putting on his coat to go out on his round of calls. "Why, what's up?" he cried on seeing Jerry's face, and his two companions carrying him.

"O, they have been making game of me, doctor, that's all."

The doctor immediately pulled off his coat, and soon was probing the wound, while Tom explained how it happened. Jerry made no outcry while the operation was in progress, but he had to clench his teeth to keep from it.

"There's the little bit of lead that did the damage, lodged close against the bone. It's well for you that the rifle was a 'toy' as you call it, or you wouldn't get back to school next term," said Dr. Young, holding up the ball for inspection. "You'll be all right in a few days if you keep quiet."

"Easier said than done, Doc; I have an appointment to go skating to-morrow."

"Keep it next winter," was the laconic reply. "I'll take you around in the cutter, Jerry," said the young physician, glad of an excuse to have a look at his sweetheart.

"All right; ta-ta, boys, come and help me brace up for the next few days. I'll beat you both at chess, as I shall play solitaire now until I am an expert, having nothing better to do," more cheerfully said Jerry.

There was a commotion in the house when Jerry limped in, leaning on the doctor's arm. Mrs. Stubleton was full of tender lamentations, and gratitude that it was no worse. Jerry was ensconced on the lounge

in the sewing-room, where his mother and Margery were still busy making up gingham aprons for the little folks that were to become members of the charity school. Jerry didn't look in the least bored to lie and listen to the pleasant chatting of the two busy women. Of course, he had to go into all the details of the hunting excursion and the accident. Margery made a good deal of sport of the affair, and got the boy quite good natured before he had been two hours in the house. After he grew tired of the conversation, and began to show it by a little restlessness and a fever flush, his mother asked if he would not like Margery to read to him. He assented very readily, and his mother having some household affairs to look after, left the two deeply absorbed in *Les Miserables*. They had reached that wonderfully vivid picture of the battle of Waterloo, and both grew excited over the thrilling description.

"By George! how those fellows did fight. Poor old Boney; one can't help but pity him."

"Served him right for being so greedy," said Margery, ready to take up the argument.

"Go on, don't stop to talk," said Jerry.

"Why, you impolite thing; for two cents I'd stop reading and trying to be entertaining."

Jerry pulled two pennies from his pocket and silently held them toward her. She looked and laughed, then struck his hand so that the pennies flew and rolled away over the floor. "Thus do I scorn your lucre," she loftily said, and went on with her reading; not aloud, however.

"No you don't, my covey, just begin where you left off or I'll—I'll—"

"O, you will, will you? just try it if you dare, you poor, helpless victim of a shot gun!"

"I'll bide my time; this ghastly wound will not forever stand between me and my revenge. Mark that, O fair Margery."

"Don't get spooney, Corporal, it's against the rules of the camp."

"Who's talking of spoons?" asked Amy, coming in at the moment.

"We're talking of *swoons* on the battle-field. Go on, Mag—I mean Margery."

So she continued her reading, while unsuspecting Amy listened with demure interest. When Margery finally closed the book, Jerry asked Amy if she knew anything about Jimmy McGinnis.

"Yes, I heard papa telling auntie some pitiful story after the boy had gone."

"Well, did he get a place?"

"Yes, of course. Did papa ever turn a needy person away?"

"Not as I know on, my dear."

"Papa is going to put him on one of the delivery teams, I think. The boy seemed to think that would be getting into the seventh heaven."

"Did you see him?"

"No, but that is what papa said."

"Ah, I remember when I felt a good deal the same way," said Jerry, as he yawned and wondered if that dinner gong was ever going to sound. "Ah! here comes my true love," as his mother entered, bearing a tray well filled with substantials.

"We expected a game dinner to-day," she said, "but our hopes were shattered as well as your leg."

"This is better than game cooked in the usual way," he said, as a nice chop greeted his sight. "O, I tell you, that was a lucious repast out in the woods to-day," and he smacked his lips at the mere thought of it.

After dinner Jerry was assisted down stairs. A little later Tom and Jack called to see how he was prospering. Dr. Young also came, not especially to see Jerry, however.

Amy, in her white wool gown, looked to Tom's eyes very bewitching. Jack also cast many admiring glances that way, but not so many in that direction as toward Margery, who wore a new dress presented on Christmas by Mrs. Stubleton, and which was very becomingly made, while its dark rich shade set off her fair skin, making her really a very pretty girl. Her manner was always a little shy and reserved when first with strangers, but this added to her charm. Jerry had never thought of her in connection with other boys, always seeming to feel that she was a part of his life, and could not be alienated; but when Jack took a seat by her side and began to make himself very agreeable, as was evident from Margery's mirthful laughter that floated across the room every little while, the silly boy actually felt like throttling his new acquaintance.

Margery happening to look that way saw his look of anger, and mistaking it for pain, said to young Warner:

"I think poor Jerry's foot is paining him a good deal, let us move our chairs over there, and let him get the benefit of some of your funny anecdotes," for Jack was a great mimic, and having a good memory

could keep a whole room full aroused with his well-told stories. Suddenly Margery sprang up and exclaimed :

“ O dear ! what *will* auntie think, I promised to be at home before dark,” and she started to run for her wraps.

“ Come back, my dear,” said Mr. Heartwell in his fatherly way, “ you remain here, and I’ll have James go and fetch Miss Dexter ; let her spend the night with you, and don’t break up this pleasant party of young people.”

“ That’s capital !” heartily cried Jack, and Jerry gave him a look that said very plainly, “ You are altogether too familiar on short acquaintance,” while Margery, nothing loath assented to the proposition, and resumed her seat. Amy and Tom joined the circle and very soon there was a confusion of tongues, for whoever saw a party of young people together without hearing such a chattering and giggling as would make a spinster or bachelor wild, and carry old married folks back to their own youthful care-free days ? When Miss Dexter arrived, there was about as lively a chatter among the older people.

Mr. Heartwell put aside his paper, and seemed very well satisfied to let the market reports and the political news take care of themselves. His sister smiled quite sagely to herself several times during the evening, as she saw how matters were tending.

Linnet was in the library and her mother could hear the doctor’s rich mellow voice engaged in reading aloud. She saw the play of her son’s boyish passion, and now here was another, an old boy with a passion cropping out. Verily the old, old story that

is forever new is continually before us. And who would have it otherwise? If love be pure and true, it is a part of God, and he who hath it not is poor indeed.

Mrs. Stubleton was a wise and sensible woman; she took these things serenely, and without one pang of jealousy, as many women so situated would feel. She was confident of her children's love, and she knew that whatever her brother might do, she would be none the less cared for.

"Sufficient unto the day," was one of her maxims, and it saved her many an hour of fret and worry.

When the two boys arose to go, Jerry said, "Well, so ends the first day's confinement. It's not so bad as our confinement days at school, eh, Tom?"

"I should rather say not. Do you remember that first Sunday, when the 'Lieutenant' came in and found the rag you had been cleaning your musket with, tucked behind the wardrobe?" Then the two boys laughed heartily, and Amy and Margery both exclaimed:

"What did he do?" "Tell us about it."

Jerry said, "You gave me away, Tom, and now I'll have to own up."

"Did you never tell it before? Well! I always write home of all my scrapes and punishments."

"I generally do," Jerry replied, "but I knew mother would worry and so I kept mum."

"Tell us, coz," pleaded Amy. By this time the older ones were also listening for the story.

"Oh, didn't amount to much; but I was so fresh, that when the Lieutenant, came in for S. M. I. and discovered the rag tucked behind the cupboard or wardrobe, I thought it a good joke because I had hurried

so to get it somewhere out of sight, when hearing his step in the hall."

"What does S. M. I. stand for?" asked Margery, "tell me that before you go on."

"Sunday Morning Inspection," replied Tom, and Jerry continued, "'Well, Private Stubleton, this entitles you to one day's close confinement,' said the Officer of the Day in a lordly sort of a way that roused my ire, and in my usual quick way I retorted, 'I'll not submit to such injustice when I have done the best I knew how.' Right away I knew I had made my cake dough, but I would not apologize, and he said, 'All right, sir; you can take an hour's tramp every day for a week to relieve the monotony of confinement.' That was his parting shot, and so I was not allowed any freedom for a week, and I tell you, I kept things pretty straight after that. It isn't agreeable to tramp, tramp, tramp, alone over a beaten path and carry a musket, while your comrades are having a good time together."

With that his mother kissed him and said, "And yet it is excellent discipline; why, you are so prompt, so obedient, so good now-a-days, that you are a much improved boy, although, I always thought you a treasure."

"Enough of that taffy," Jerry laughingly replied, at the same time looking pleased as he caught Margery's admiring look. The boys finally took their departure, though apparently with reluctance and Jerry was assisted upstairs and carefully tucked in bed by his devoted mother. Silence brooded over the happy household for the inmates were sleeping, as sleep only the good and the pure in heart.

CHAPTER XXII.

IT must have been about three o'clock in the morning when a shriek ran through the house which curdled the blood of all who heard it. It seemed to come from Linnet's room, which adjoined her brother's. Mrs. Stubleton's was at the other end of the hall, being nearer the bell leading to the servants' room, also the speaking tube leading to the kitchen.

She bounded from her bed and hastened to her daughter's room, when she found the poor girl all of a tremble, and as pale as a ghost. "What is it, my darling?" she cried, taking the young girl in her arms as she stood panting, and clutching the back of the arm chair for support.

"O, mother! I am so frightened! Some one laid their cold, clammy hands upon my face, and when I started and asked, 'Who's that?' I heard a stealthy step steal away and out of the room, and then I shrieked; I could not help it."

By this time all the household were aroused and Miss Dexter, with Margery, had been among the first to hasten in the direction of the cry; their room being across the hall from Linnet's. Jerry called out to know "what menagerie had been let loose?" Mr. Heartwell with his revolver was parading the lower regions in search of intruders, he having heard a sound of footsteps, also. Amy alone seemed to sleep soundly through the disturbance; her room adjoined Mrs. Stubleton's, and she, being a very timid girl,

always insisted upon having her door fastened to keep out burglars. So no one disturbed her to make any inquiries.

Mr. Heartwell returned saying, "No sign of burglars anywhere; Linnet must have had a night-mare."

"Oh, no," she exclaimed, "I was having a very rosy dream, when the sensation of something cold touching my face startled me. I put up my hand and *felt a hand*. O! it gave me such a terrified feeling, for it seemed so damp and unearthly." After a little more wondering and speculating over the mystery, the family retired. Mrs. Stubleton, who had been up and down several times to see if Jerry was in want of anything, now lay down with her arms about her daughter, who, with such a loving protector, soon fell asleep. Nothing further disturbed their rest. When the affair was discussed at the breakfast table, Amy was horrified and said to her cousin, "Now, dearie, take my advice and never sleep with your door unfastened. Oh-oh-oh! it might have happened to me! I should never live through such an experience I know; and would turn gray with half such a fright."

Linnet looked pale and appeared somewhat nervous all day. "I shall sleep with you until Jerry is all right again, darling, so you need not fear for the present," said Mrs. Stubleton.

Soon after breakfast Dr. Young came to attend Jerry's wound, and judging from the length of his stay it was a very serious affair. The boy, however, was in very amiable spirits and seemed not to realize the condition he was in; or, rather, the condition the neighbors supposed him to be in, as they watched the

doctor's horse growing more and more restless as the minutes lengthened until an hour had passed.

Of course Linnet's pale face had attracted him, and he was made acquainted with the night's adventure. "My precious dove, my arms shall soon shelter you from all such alarms; would to heaven you were mine now."

"No spooning in my presence, if you please," cried Jerry, and Linnet laughingly replied, "It makes him envious, poor boy."

"Bah!" was the only rejoinder she got.

Amy coming in, put a stop to further spooning, and further sparring. "Something to amuse you, coz" she said. "Margery and I are planning a candy pull for to-night; you can eat the goody, and talk, if nothing else."

"That's hunkey; good for you! keep it up, Amy, and I'll bless you, my child," said the boy in a fatherly tone: then smiling at her, said, "I s'pose Tom and Jack are to be of the party?"

"Of course," she replied.

"Well, Tom's well enough; but can't you have some one beside that Jack? or if you invite him ask Nell Hokum in, too."

"Yes, that is a good scheme," replied innocent Amy, and, away she ran to get her coat and hat and bid James get the cutter ready. Jerry watched them spin away, and then chuckled to himself. "We'll see if that interloper has eyes for somebody else besides my Maggie. Jack's a good sort of a fellow, but a little too fresh on short notice," and Jerry settled back in the big easy chair, his foot on a pillow in another chair while he became absorbed in his book—"From the

Gutter to the State House"—a history of a poor, uneducated boy who overcame all obstacles and temptations, and became a self-made, honorable man, and proved that where there is a will there is a way.

Evening brought together the same happy company. Mrs. Stubleton found some work relating to the poor which kept Miss Dexter from going away in the morning, and in the afternoon it rained so hard that she persuaded her to wait until evening, knowing well her brother's persuasions could prevail better than her own in detaining this pleasant little woman under their hospitable roof. She was not wrong, for when Mr. Heartwell came to his six o'clock dinner, he said, "Well, I was in hopes to find you still here; it is just the evening for desiring congenial company, and we will have a game of whist while the youngsters amuse themselves as they like."

"You are very kind, Mr. Heartwell, but really Maggie and I ought to return home and attend to our own affairs."

"Nonsense! you can't go in this rain, and besides I have my mind set on a good game. Can't think of letting you go before to-morrow," and patting Margery's head, continued, "I don't see how we can spare this bright little maid, she seems already a part of the family: I think we shall have to adopt her."

"Can't you adopt Miss Dexter, too, uncle?" queried Jerry with a twinkle in his eye, observed only by his mother.

Mr. Heartwell actually blushed, and as he smiled and looked shyly from under his brows at Miss Dexter, saw a rosy blush also suffusing that lady's benign countenance. Nothing further was said about leaving,

and the party gathered in the library for their game, Dr. Young being enticed for a few hours from his darling's side to form the quartette around the little table, while Linnet amused herself at her beloved harp.

The young folks adjourned to the kitchen—Jerry being helped to an arm chair where he could watch the proceedings, and the candy-making went on. Nell Hokum was a tall slender girl “full of the old Nick,” Jerry said, and made them all like her by her free and natural manners. She and Jack kept up a lively fusillade, and the rest joined in whenever they could get a chance.

“Look out! Your candy is boiling over!” shouted Jerry, the rest being engaged in some little controversy, and forgetting the boiling mass.

“Oh, *dear!*” “O, *my!*” “Who’ll take it off?” “Be quick!” shouted the girls in chorus, while Jack and Tom ran hither and thither, trying to find something to answer for a holder. The molasses didn’t wait, however, and the stove was covered, while the burning mass sent out fumes that almost suffocated the group. At last Tom seized a white apron from a peg and removed the kettle.

“Nice looking piece of wearing apparel to be hanging in your kitchen, I must say,” he exclaimed, as he held it up for display. “I thought you a more tidy housekeeper, Amy.”

“O—h! you’ll catch it,” she replied; “that is one of Jane’s prides. See, the lace is all scorched.” Then Tom chucked it under the table and vowed he never did it—but the next day a package addressed to “Jane Glover” being opened by that worthy cook, disclosed an apron so much finer than the spoiled one,

that she was appeased for the loss of the old one, and the sad state in which she found her stove the morning after the candy pull.

When the pot was replaced and the contents began to "hair," the young folks became all excitement. Amy flew around to grease the pans; Jack made himself very officious by going into the pantry and bringing out a dozen or so useless articles, very foreign to the occasion, but which raised a laugh, and that seemed what he most desired.

Margery and Tom stood over the pot as anxiously as two fond parents would hover over their first-born with a new tooth just peeping through. Nell was telling Jerry of some of her boarding-school pranks, and their jolly laughter caused Margery to look askance at her wounded friend and think, "poor boy, I'm glad he can forget his pain and be so happy." Her's was a nature that thought of others before self, and consequently was seldom in the blues. It is selfish people who are always murmuring, and always feeling abused, and as a matter of course, always unhappy, save when everything is going just as they want it to go.

When the pulling began, each one tried to excel in getting the whitest candy. Jack finally fell into a chair, declaring himself exhausted, but in an instant sprang up, or tried to spring up, to go to Nell's assistance, who had got so mixed up as to be unable to extricate her fingers.

He gave a look of wild dismay as he found himself glued to his chair!

"Great guns! What's the matter!" and writhing and twisting until all the rest came to see what was

up, Jack gave a most ludicrous howl as he realized that his best breeches were ruined.

"Oh!" exclaimed Tom, "I laid the cloth with which I wiped off the stove in that chair; it was covered with half-cooked molasses!"

"That's just what one would expect of a boy," cried Nell Hokum, who had several brothers, and knew their thoughtless ways.

"What's a fellow to do?—'Thunder turtles!' as Tommy would say. Girls please leave me to my sorrow for a little while," was Jack's rueful cry, and the girls fled to the dining-room, full of giggles and pity.

Tom assisted Jack to rise, and scraped and rubbed until, though somewhat damp, the poor fellow was again presentable, and the girls were recalled. Soon after, they carried their sweets to the library and munched and chatted with the older people, who rested from their game to partake of refreshments and laugh at their young friend's mishaps.

So another pleasant evening wore away, and Cupid was in ecstasy over the success of his well-aimed arrows.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AT the end of Jerry's vacation the wound had sufficiently healed to warrant his safe return to school. No wounded soldier had ever been tended more carefully by surgeon or nurse.

He declared the gun-shot had been a God-send, for he had never known his worth before, and from one and all, had received the best of care and attention. Margery had come every day and spent an hour or so reading to or with him—just for company's sake. Amy had her music and painting to attend to, his mother her home and charitable work, and so it came upon Margery to play nurse, and it is safe to affirm neither found it a bore to be so situated.

The evening before Jerry was to leave he said he "was almost sorry that he had got well enough to go," and thereupon begun to limp and make wry faces and all sorts of contortions.

"Don't!" cried Amy; "I shall have more bad dreams of you. I have dreamed of you dying of your wound and been exerting myself to save you almost every night, until the past three nights, and I don't want such dreams to return."

"Strange you never spoke of it before," said Linnet, anxiously.

"Because I am so superstitious I did not dare, for fear it might come true; and I did not want to worry you all, but I thought his blood was poisoned, and I bathed and bathed the wound in my dreams."

That night, strange to say, again Linnet was aroused by a step in the hall passing her door. Her quick ear detected sounds which others would never heed. She heard the step enter Jerry's room, and knowing it to be too quick for her mother's tread, and too light for her brother's, waited for further developments as she felt a chill take possession of her, and trembled, as the memory of that clammy touch came back so vividly. A thrill of horror ran through her as she heard Jerry's voice in a startled way cry out, "Who's that?" and then heard him leap from his bed and a woman's voice utter a scream. She called loudly for her mother, who came running excitedly, and asking what was the matter. Mr. Heartwell then came upon the scene, and striking a match lit the hall gas. The bright light disclosed a scene for a painter: ludicrous when understood, for the faces as first seen wore such terrified and excited expressions, which slowly gave place to surprise, then laughter, as the truth dawned upon them. Linnet was clasping her mother in a frantic manner. Mr. Heartwell stood with his revolver cocked, ready to fire at the supposed burglar, while Jerry was holding in a tiger-like grip a young woman too frightened to utter a sound. When he saw who it was he held in his arms, he exclaimed "Great Scott! *Amy!* Why I might have hurt you; what are you doing with that wet towel or rag? I think you were mopping my face, but what for?"

"Oh—*Oh!* I am so weak, let me sit down and I'll tell you. You frightened me, more than I frightened you. I had that same old dream that you were burning up with fever, and I was nursing you, and bathing your hot face. I must have got up in my sleep and

come to your room," said Amy, looking pale and exhausted.

"Then that accounts for Linnet's ghost," said her father, tenderly taking her in his arms and carrying her to her own room, laying her in bed as tenderly as her mother would have done. He kissed her, saying, "There, my little somnambulist, go to sleep and dream no more."

The morning broke clear and bright, and the household gathered about the cheerful breakfast table full of happy chat, for all were bent on giving the "Corporal" a good send off. His mother had taken him to herself the evening before for a little wise counsel. His uncle took him to one side after breakfast and gave him some fatherly advice, backed by a generous bank bill. Linnet embraced him with unusual tenderness, saying, "Brother mine, never forget the high hopes we all centre in you: keep your dear heart pure and tender always."

"I'll do my best, sis; I wouldn't be fit to live if I in any way bring dishonor to you dear ones."

"Well spoken, my lad," said his uncle; "and now what has my Amy to say to her cousin?"

"Come back with another stripe, coz, and that will tell us of your good conduct," she said in reply to her father.

"All right, Amy, you shall have your way. Now I want to run down and say a few words to Jimmy before I go; he sets a store by me," said the young cadet complacently.

"Nothing conceited about you, is there?" laughed Amy.

"Nothing like telling the truth," he called back,

and three pairs of doting eyes gazed after the manly boy as he strode toward the store, or the cars leading to the store.

"He'll not go without saying good-bye to Margery, will he?" asked Linnet.

"Not by any manner of means, I'll warrant he's headed that way now," said Amy, who thought she had divined his intention from the first.

Turning to his sister, Mr. Heartwell said: "I wonder you were not thoughtful enough to invite them here for Jerry's last evening at home, Catherine."

"I did, my dear; but Miss Dexter was suffering from neuralgia in the face and feared to expose herself, and Margery would not leave her, of course."

"Umph! you should not have had her go from here when it stormed so the other day," was the man-like rejoinder. He knew there was blame somewhere, and like the rest of the Adams, preferred putting all the cause of trouble at poor Eve's door.

Mrs. Stubleton looked somewhat amused as well as a trifle hurt as she replied, "Miss Dexter is not the woman to be swayed against her will; she has been her own mistress too many years; and how should I know you so desired her presence?"

Her brother looked chagrined, and at once felt himself unreasonable, but of course he did not say so. He rang for James, and soon after was driving away to business. He stopped at a florist's on the way, however, and selecting very carefully a dainty little basket, had it filled with choice flowers, and directed it sent to Miss Dexter's address. He smiled as he reseated himself in his buggy and muttered: "There's no fool like an old fool."

Margery stood at the ironing table, her face aglow from the near contact with the heat of the stove. Her plump figure, with its well-fitting calico dress, and neat white collar and apron, looking a very model of a tidy housewife. There was a slight shade of sadness in the blue eyes, for she was thinking how lonely the next few months would be, and feeling a pang of regret that she was denied the last evening of Jerry's companionship. Not for the world would she have her auntie know this, but that lady being absorbed in self just at present was lying with a heated iron to her painful face. A quick rap, and then the entrance of the Corporal brought a glad cry from the impulsive young woman at the ironing-board.

"Oh, Jerry! how good of you to come away down here to see us before going."

"You surely didn't think I would go without seeing you, did you? Why, I'd as soon go without bidding my—my—cousin Amy good-bye," he replied, a little confused, for he had almost said "mother," and then feeling a bashful consciousness that he was exposing too much of his heart, had stumbled upon his cousin Amy's name. Here he handed her a package done up in tissue paper, saying, "I thought a bit of summer would brighten the house this dull winter day."

She took off the wrapping of paper and cotton batting and uttered a cry of delight as she carried the gift to her auntie, who had turned to see what was going on, and greeted Jerry with a smile of welcome.

"See these sweet carnations, auntie; my favorites! Jerry, you are a jewel!"

"Are they your favorites? Glad I hit upon them. Simms (the florist) was making up an elegant basket

of roses, and I was anxious for one like it, but he hadn't time to make one, and to tell the truth, Mag, it was a little too steep for my purse. He said 'some old gentleman had ordered it made without delay,' and was very particular to have the best of his collection."

"These are far prettier than roses, I think," and she deftly arranged them in a little glass vase, which had long been but a useless ornament on the mantel-shelf. She drew a little stand to the bedside and said, "There, auntie, these will charm away the pain."

"Well, I must be off. I spent too long a time at the store talking to Jimmy and the boys—I tell you he is growing quite good looking, and is going to make a first-class business man, uncle says. He has taken Dick's place——"

"By the way, what has become of Dick?" interrupted Margery.

"Oh! he's studying the Bible like a good fellow. He is in dead earnest, and when Dick sets out to do anything, there's no half way about it. He has a sort of bull-dog grit."

"That's a very good article when rightly applied," said Miss Dexter.

Jerry then bade the two women an affectionate good-bye, after expressing sympathy for the elder, and bidding the younger "write all the news she could muster."

"A dear, kind-hearted boy," was Miss Dexter's comment, when the door closed behind him. The sentiment found an echo in the young girl's heart, though she made no reply.

A few moments had elapsed when another rap caused Margery to leave her work and open the door.

A boy stood with a good sized box under his arm and enquired, "Does Miss Dexter live here?"

"Yes, she does."

"Here's a package for her," and the boy was half way down the block before Margery realized that she was holding the package.

She gave it to her aunt, who said, "There must be some mistake—Oh! I guess it is from Mrs. Stubleton—some work for the school," and she undid the package, disclosing the "elegant basket of roses."

Margery clapped her hands in delight. "Ah, you sly old auntie! Who are you carrying on a flirtation with, unbeknown to me."

"Auntie" was dumb with surprise. She held the lovely, and to her rare gift, from her, then drew it near to inhale the delicious fragrance, then espied within the heart of the bouquet a card which she eagerly withdrew and read: "Hoping these may charm away the pain. Yours sincerely, J. I. Heartwell."

"Oh! Oh!" exclaimed Margery, "it's just as I have expected! how could he help it?"

"Maggie, don't be ridiculous. What do you mean?" but from the color that suffused Miss Dexter's face, it was evident she needed no explanation of her niece's insinuation. She arose, and making some trivial excuse, left the room to escape the mirthful eyes of Miss Mag. That young lady gave a low whistle when by herself, and muttered, "How jolly! couldn't have found a better match the world over." Then taking up her own little bunch of flowers, she nestled her nose caressingly amongst the blossoms and thought herself the more favored of the two, and started like a guilty thing when her aunt suddenly reappeared, find-

ing her in a brown study over her carnations. It was strange how silent the two were concerning the friends who had so kindly remembered them; but all that day a quiet calm brooded over the humble little dwelling, yet there was no sadness in the silence. The roses seemed indeed to have charmed away the pain, for a serene content seemed to have lifted the shadow that had marred for two days the peaceful expression of Miss Dexter's face. She sat at her mending basket, while her niece, in the sweet, perfumed atmosphere, hummed her soft little airs so dear to her wee scholars; this being Saturday, and the day of all the week left them for baking, ironing, mending, etc., the washing being done Friday afternoon, as school closed at noon on that day.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE next day being Sunday, and the day on which Miss Dexter and her niece usually dined at the Heartwells, by special request, failed to bring the welcome pair, and Mr. Heartwell, after a restless wandering over the house on his return from his church and Sunday-school duties, finally seated himself beside his sister, who sat in the library before the glowing fire, reading, and said, in a tone unlike his usual self: "Well, Catherine, you have had your way regarding Margery's disposal, and if not asking too much I should like to know how your plans are unfolding."

His sister with a woman's keen insight had seen more than she chose to tell of his thoughts and actions, and so laying aside her book she replied, "I am very glad of the opportunity Jerome. My plans are working very successfully. I have Miss Dexter superintending the school, and Margery is her able assistant. We have about forty pupils, ranging in age from five to fifteen years. The younger ones are taught how to use their minds and hands in various kindergarten gifts, as well as their letters, while the older ones are taught reading, writing, and figures, also sewing, and cooking plain substantial food. They cook dinner for the school. I do want you to visit the 'Bee-hive' as we call it, a cleaner, cheerier spot can be found nowhere."

"It certainly sounds well," replied her brother, "and I shall do myself the honor of calling very soon. By

the way, where are our friends to-day?"—as though their absence had just occurred to him.

"I presume Miss Dexter is still suffering with neuralgia; shall I send James to enquire?"

"No," he said; "wait awhile." Mrs. Stubleton then continued, "I have another young girl protégée, whom I expect will take Margery's place this spring; and then, if you approve, put *her* in school. She is a bright girl, and quite well advanced in her studies; her aunt has taught her at home. If you do not approve of the public school, place her in Miss Morton's young ladies' school; it is an excellent one, and neither you nor I approve of sending her to a boarding-school."

"No; I did at first think it the thing to do, but Margery is too sensible and true-hearted now to be placed among a lot of superficial young ladies to be spoiled and get a lot of false notions of life. Dress and beaux are their chief ambition."

"Yes," said Mrs. Stubleton, "Margery is going to make a noble woman, under the right influences. She is unselfish, conscientious, and always sweet tempered, and as nice a little housekeeper as one can imagine."

"Very well then, for the spring term have her ready for Miss Morton's school. She need only go there to recite, and can still be in Miss Dexter's care," and Mr. Heartwell arose and began humming "The Sweet Bye and Bye."

His sister smiled as she made the application, and said, "I do not know that Miss Dexter will consent to this proposition; she is a very independent woman, and does not approve of being under obligations to any one."

"Leave that to me," was her brother's brief reply, and she knew then that her days as his housekeeper were numbered.

After a rather silent dinner, for during Jerry's visit much company had kept the house in a flutter of merry excitement, Mr. Heartwell ordered the coupé, and bade Amy don her cloak and hood and come with him. She was always ready to obey her indulgent and fond father, who was to her, friend, guide, and counsellor, since her mother's death, until his sister relieved him of some responsibility concerning Amy's education and welfare.

They found Miss Dexter better, but were surprised to see her niece lying on the bed looking quite pale, and with the merry light all gone from the blue eyes. "Why! what ails our Margery?" enquired Mr. Heartwell, taking her hand and feeling her pulse.

"Poor child, she tripped and fell when going down the stairs a little while ago, and almost frightened me out of my senses," said Miss Dexter.

"How *did* you do it, dear?" questioned Amy, too anxious to wait further delay. Margery smiled rather faintly as she replied: "Oh, it was that horrid loose board. Our landlord just won't see to anything in this rickety old rookery, and I've been trying to patch it up myself, but made a botch of it, of course. I tried to save myself, and made a bad matter worse, for I turned a somersault and lit on my head, I guess, for I did not know anything until I found myself here and auntie crying over me."

"How long since it happened?" asked Mr. Heartwell looking at Miss Dexter with an anxious face

"It was about eleven o'clock, I think; we were just

getting ready to go to see you. I did not go to church, as we overslept and were too late with our morning work; for two nights previous I had been so wakeful with my painful face."

"And is it well enough for you now to venture out?" he asked with much concern.

"Oh, yes; I knew if we did not keep our Sunday engagement you would think one of us ill, and so I was making the effort to go as usual to dine with you."

"Hereafter we will send the carriage for you. It was very thoughtless in me not to do so to-day, but I am not much given to looking after ladies and that must be my excuse."

"Oh, I beg you will not take that trouble," said Miss Dexter, looking somewhat embarrassed. Mr. Heartwell then turned to Amy and said: "Daughter, you remain here while I drive around for Dr. Young. It is best for Margery to have his attention. No thanks," he said, as Miss Dexter began protesting, and expressing her gratitude. "Margery is very dear to me as well as to you, and it is a pleasure to be of service." Sly man! did he know there was no surer way of reaching Miss Dexter's heart?

When the Doctor arrived, he said, after thoroughly examining his patient, "You must keep very quiet for a few days; you have given a wrench to some of the muscles of the neck and spine that will require time and patience to restore to their normal condition. And also be very careful, Miss Dexter, that she be kept free from any exposure to drafts."

He left some liniment and medicine, and, saying he

was on his way to a patient who was very low, took his departure.

Mr. Heartwell accompanied him outside, and after a low talk, the former re-entered the room and said: "The doctor agrees with me; Margery must be removed to our house, where she can have a nurse. You have too many duties, Miss Dexter, to undertake any additional ones; besides, in this room, and in this neighborhood, Margery cannot have quiet and freedom from exposure."

"I think I can manage," she replied, a little proudly, "to take care of my niece without placing us both under such obligations to any strangers, Mr. Heartwell."

He looked hurt, and said, drawing her aside, while Amy was in conversation with Margery: "The doctor tells me it is a serious case, and may end in brain fever or nervous prostration, and that the most diligent care and vigilance are necessary. I am only acting on his suggestion, Miss Dexter, and you know we would all feel easier knowing she had a trained nurse. You have neither room nor conveniences, if you will pardon my presumption in saying so."

Miss Dexter looked very anxious, and consented without further objections, and it was arranged to remove the invalid that afternoon, when the close carriage could be made more available than the coupé.

CHAPTER XXV.

MARGERY found herself feeling quite comfortable when she awoke next morning in her new, yet familiar quarters. Everything was done to make her feel at home, and Miss Dexter started for her school with quite a light heart, and blessed Mr. Heartwell for his thoughtfulness. As she was passing out the hall, he came forward, and said: "I have ordered the carriage so that I might accompany you. I want to visit your school, and this is a good opportunity—that is, of course, if it is agreeable to you," he added, seeing her hesitate and look somewhat embarrassed.

She hardly knew what to reply, she was taken so unawares, but said quietly, "I really would prefer some other day, because on Monday morning it takes some unusual care to get them into the proper routine of mind and work."

"Oh, to be sure! Well, let it go; some other day will do as well; only I shall take the liberty of driving with you this morning."

"You are too kind, Mr. Heartwell. I had as lief go by the cars, as usual."

"I would *rather* you went in the carriage," and he looked smilingly into her face.

She acquiesced without further parley, and as the school was some miles away from the Heartwell residence, it took them some time to get over the distance. After a little desultory conversation, Miss Dexter said: "I have not had the politeness yet to thank you for

the beautiful floral gift I received a few days since. It did me a great deal of good, I think, and brightened my room like the sunshine."

Thereupon, Mr. Heartwell, in an impulsive moment, seized the lady's hand, and in a few brief words asked her to become his wife, and brighten all the coming days for him. "I have felt from the moment I beheld you that I needed just such a spirit to bring back life and warmth to my heart. My wife was an invalid for years, and my one care during the latter part of her life was to make her comfortable—happy she could not be for her suffering. She longed to be at rest. I loved her with a fatherly devotion, but I believe in you I will find a congenial companion, and, I am sure, my heart's best love, the ripe love of mature years, will not fail to bring a response from your own heart, and make you as happy as I shall be in possessing you."

Miss Dexter was struck dumb at this declaration. She had, indeed, seen that Mr. Heartwell's regard for her was something beyond mere friendliness, and had caught in his look, tone, and manner, that which had stirred her heart to rapid throbbing. She admired him exceedingly. His honest dealing, his benevolence, his warm-heartedness and sympathy, were traits to call forth more than ordinary approbation. She had not dared analyze her feelings beyond this point. But now, as she felt the warm grasp of his hand, and felt that in him there was one to shield her from all future care, one who had a heart as tender as her own, who would love and protect, and be in her advancing years friend and companion when her Maggie should be

taken from her, her heart gave a joyous bound, and she frankly answered her impatient lover:

"I think my heart has been waiting for you all these years. You are the only man I ever knew that I cared to entrust with its keeping." And she smiled in his face with a look of sunshine that bespoke the truth of her assertion.

He clasped her in his arms for one moment, but she speedily released herself, as she said, while her face was aflame with confusion: "Not here; not now! I—I—let me alone until I realize it all."

He laughed and said in reply, "Have your way. I have the future years in which to make love to you, so can wait—a little while."

"The bookkeeper smiled that afternoon
As the merchant sang an old love tune."

The children were models of sweetness on that memorable Monday, at least so thought Miss Dexter.

Margery was cheery and quite comfortable, when the family gathered in her little room for a quiet chat during the evening. She was planning what she was to do when she got about, how she had been thinking of her auntie's room at home, and she "was going to get some new paper just the shade of that on these walls, and fix up auntie's room all her own self."

Here Mr. Heartwell astonished them all by putting his arm around Miss Dexter and saying: "I claim the privilege of furnishing 'auntie's' room, and yours, too, my little maid; 'auntie' belongs to me as well as to you," and he looked the picture of happiness as he imprinted a kiss on her burning brow, for "auntie" was as modest, and as bashful as a young girl of sixteen.

And thus the announcement of their engagement was speedily made known. Mrs. Stubleton quietly kissed her friend and future sister as she said. "That is as it should be; now we shall have both you and dear Margery with us, and until dear Linny is married, have a united circle of true lovers."

Margery clapped her hands and cried, "Ah! I knew what was coming when I saw that basket of roses." Amy came forward and putting her arms around her papa's neck said softly in his ear, "It is all right if you are happy, papa; I was happy as could be before, for Aunt Catherine is all a mother could be to me."

Her father patted her cheek and whispered in reply, "You shall have the mother you love best, my darling. Your auntie's home is here until she leaves it of her own free will." During this little by-play Miss Dexter sat on the bedside holding her niece's hand. She finally said, "I would have preferred this disclosure under my own roof, but Mr. Heartwell has lead the charge in such a way that retreat was impossible."

This successful hero laughed complacently and remarked that "all was fair in love and war."

"And I have been made a cat's paw, have I? retorted Margery; "I wont submit, I—" but as she spoke and tried to lift herself from her reclining position a change came over her face, and sinking back with a moan, she swooned away. All was excitement and confusion for the next few moments. Dr. Young, who was with his sweetheart below stairs, was hastily summoned, and when learning the circumstances looked very grave. Restoratives were applied and when consciousness returned, Margery found no one

about but her aunt, who still sat beside her, fondling her hand.

"You must be very quiet, dearie, and don't attempt any sudden moves again; you frightened us all by collapsing in such a manner."

"I didn't think," replied her niece.

That night the young girl moaned and burned with fever. The morning brought the doctor, and he said to Mr. Heartwell after leaving his patient: "Procure a trained nurse immediately—or I will do so—and let her orders be obeyed to the letter. Brain fever is threatened, and I fear the worst, from such a concussion as she received." An hour afterward the nurse—a woman of about thirty years, of good address and a sweet, gentle face, took the patient in charge. Her intelligent conversation soon convinced the family of her ability, and after a few days all were satisfied that Margery was in the best possible hands. She was at times quite delirious, and talked much of Jerry, and lived again among her little scholars. Her aunt and Mrs. Stubleton sat with her awhile each day taking turns while the nurse, Miss Faber, went for a walk, or took a few hours' sleep, to recruit.

Amy had written Jerry all the particulars in the beginning, and when he learned of Margery's serious illness, the poor lad was quite beside himself, and the family could not help being amused at the advice he gave. We copy one of his letters for the benefit of our readers, written after the first week of Margery's illness. It ran thus:

"*My Dear Mother*—I am so upset over Maggie's accident and illness that I am unfit for anything. I try to study and her pale face comes between me and

the letters. Amy says she calls for me, bless her sweet eyes! I only wish I could be there and do something to relieve her suffering. Don't let that nurse run the whole house, and see that she gives her patient plenty of good, substantial food. (Mrs. Stubleton smiled audibly when she came to this passage, it was so like a boy.) Tell Amy she can keep up the cold water applications as she tried them on me, but not quite so stealthily. Don't let Uncle Jerome forget the carnations for her room, they are her favorite flowers. I sometimes think I will ask for leave-of-absence for a week or so, could I do any good at home? Now, mother, this letter is for your eyes alone. You know I love Maggie, and have for years; but the rest of the world has no business to know it until Maggie herself knows it, which of course she doesn't suspect; for I have never said a word to her and wouldn't for the world. I tell you everything, because I know you won't betray me; the rest think we are only good friends. Good-bye.

Your sorrowful boy,

JERRY.

P. S. Write me every day, and if she gets worse telegraph, for I won't stand it to have her die and I not there to have one last word.

JERRY.

There was a big blot at the close of the letter, and Mrs. Stubleton dropped one of her own tears beside that of her boy's. Was it for Margery? I think it was for the boy she was losing.

She folded the letter and put it sacredly away, telling the others only the bits of advice it contained.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WEEKS of dreadful suspense and anxiety on the part of relatives and friends, and of suffering on the part of the patient, went by, and still Margery moaned and tossed in the delirium of brain fever. The whole household wore an air of pathos. Doctor Young called in a brother professional in consultation at this juncture, and some new remedies were administered. In a few days thereafter the nurse reported a gradual change for the better, and hope, so long deferred, lightened all their footsteps. But what a shadow of her plump, rosy self, was she, when at last Margery looked about her in consciousness. Her head had been shorn of its silken and abundant locks, and when after a number of weeks of convalescence she asked for the small mirror, she was so startled and shocked that she burst out crying, and sobbed in broken sentences,—“I am so ugly—that—nobody—will—want to—look—at—me; Jerry—will hate—such a fright; I’m glad he is away!” This happened while Miss Dexter was on guard, and she very tenderly soothed the silly girl, telling her “she would soon be her old self again, that her worth lay far deeper than looks, and that it was her sweet disposition more than silken hair and rosy cheeks that brought her friends.” But her niece would not so believe, in her present childish condition and continued to fret and cry for a long time. Auntie Dexter was in despair, she feared this excitement would bring on a relapse, and yet

dared not show her anxiety. Mrs. Stubleton happened in just here and seeing how matters stood, said to Miss Dexter, "I want you a few moments. Linnet will come and stay with Margery, she can soothe when all others fail."

Linnet came, and the touch of her gentle hand, the sound of her sweet low voice acted like a charm, "Dear," she said, "I know you are better and I am so happy. Why, do you know, the house has seemed so dark even to me who am always in darkness—your blithe step and cheery ways make so much sunshine; how thankful you must be for such a nature, Margery."

"I'm not thankful for anything. If you could see me you would run away; I look like a scarecrow; even my nurse said, 'I looked like a little picked chicken!'"

Linnet laughed softly and replied, "Your feathers will come out more glossy than ever, and you'll be so pretty that Amy and I will be very jealous. But let me sing you a new song my dear teacher brought me."

"Oh, yes, that is what I need; I have heard you in my dreams many and many a time." Then Linnet sang a soft sweet air that reminded one of a murmuring brooklet, and before she had finished, the tired head of her patient had drooped, and the hand she was holding became passive.

The nurse then relieved Linnet, who went for her daily ride with her careful and fond lover.

A letter from Jerry came at this time, and we give it entire as it will explain his sentiments better than we can do so for him.

"*Dear Mother*—I have not had a word from home in a week, and I am boiling over with righteous indignation. Are you afraid to tell me the truth? I shall start for home to-morrow, *sure*, if no news comes. I asked the Professor last week for a few days' leave-of-absence but he disrespectfully declined without some word from headquarters. I shall disgrace myself by running away, and I'll not be to blame, either. I will give you time to answer this by telegram, but I'll wait no longer. You see I am as mad as a March hare."

"Mr. Strong, our natural history teacher with whom I spent last summer's vacation, is going over the same route this year, only camping in another vicinity; he is anxious to know if I am to form one of the party. I told him I would write my uncle about it, but between you and me and the gate post, I'd rather be with you this summer. I know all I care to at present about natural history—I prefer to study human nature, and there is no better place for that than New York. So talk it up with Uncle Jerome, and speak a good word for your unhappy boy, whose heart is breaking for one line from home, and yet so slight a boon is denied.

JERRY."

Mrs. Stubleton smiled as she muttered, "Poor boy! his heart is seriously affected. I supposed Amy had written him."

A telegram was immediately sent saying: "Margery is much better; am writing you to-day.—MOTHER."

Jerry threw up his hat and rejoiced.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Two days later, as Jerry was sitting in his room trying to mend his ball, his thoughts many miles away, Tom came, holding in his hand a letter, and teasingly exclaimed, "What will you give for a letter from your sweetheart, old boy?"

Now Jerry had not made a confidant of his roommate, and Tom only surmised that Margery was Jerry's favorite, and did not know of her extreme illness, or he would not have tormented his friend at such an unseasonable time.

Jerry said, "I'm in no mood for your deviltry, Tom, give me my letter," and Jerry tried to grasp the white-winged messenger.

Tom was too quick for him and dodged out of the room. Jerry's face flamed up and he felt so hurt at Tom's want of feeling, of sympathy—forgetting at the time that he had kept Tom ignorant of home news—that his anger fairly bubbled over and he flew after the culprit with the speed of the wind. It was the noon hour, and so the boys were free to run at will. Away they went across the road, over the rail fence, through the pasture lot, over the babbling brook that had so lately burst its ice bands, then into the timber lot. Tom was laughing and looking over his shoulder, when his foot caught in a grape vine and he was violently thrown to the ground. He lay so still and turned so white, that Jerry's wrath, which was about to find vent in some harsh words, was nipped in the bud, and

he sank exhausted by Tom's side, looking almost as white as his companion.

"Oh, my! I've got my pay, Jerry; I guess I've broken my ankle."

"I was hot enough a minute ago to be glad of anything that might happen you, Tom; it was so very unkind when you knew that it was a matter of life and death, for that letter follows a telegram."

Tom sat up and looked wildly at his friend, at the same time making a grimace, for his foot was becoming very painful. "What do you mean Jerry, is anything wrong at home? Is that what has made you so down in the mouth lately? and I thought you were feeling ugly toward me because I sided with Bert in the race the other day."

"You have a very small opinion of me, Tom, if that is the way you judge my character; but where is my letter? It is from mother, and about Margery, who has been very sick for some weeks."

"Why, bless me! Where is it? I had it in my hand when I fell," and Tom hobbled to his feet, but no sooner got up than down he sat with a groan, "O—h! what am I to do? here we are, a mile from school and my ankle twisted out of its socket, and where the deuce is your letter?"

"Well, I must let it go and see to your foot first," magnanimously exclaimed Jerry. He helped Tom off with his shoe and sock, and then started for the brook. He soon returned with a lot of mud which he plastered on to Tom's foot, and tied it in place with his handkerchief. "Now I must go and get some reinforcements," he said, "and meantime keep your eye out for my letter."

It was a half hour before Jerry returned with Patrick, the man of all work, and the two carried Tom as he had helped carry Jerry when he got the shot intended for Jack Rabbit.

"Hang it all! Here's a pretty go! No foot ball, base ball, or any fun for me for six weeks to come. I can't even have the satisfaction of hearing a pretty girl read to me, as you did."

"Serves you right, next time mind your own business," curtly replied Jerry, for he felt very sore over his loss. How much he had thought of that letter and longed to scan its contents. Now it was nowhere to be seen.

When their charge was deposited in the house and the school physician summoned, Jerry left Tom in one of the maid's hands and started back for his letter, never doubting that he would run across it somewhere.

He was doomed to disappointment; the bit of paper so important to him had mysteriously disappeared! He even raked the leaves, and shook the trees in hopes to see the fluttering thing come forth. He walked far and near, looked up and down and all around, then sadly retraced his steps, and had Tom search his pockets, his clothes, his hat—but no letter, Tom was greatly discomfited, and was loud in self-denunciation.

The other boys, when they heard of the incident, also searched, but no trace was found, and at last it grew to be a thing of the past. Jerry wrote for more news, which came, bringing still the glad word, "convalescent."

Four weeks soon rolled away and brought Tom and Jerry home for Easter week.

Tom's foot had kept him so confined that he looked pale and thin, and he found everybody full of anxious solicitude. How good it seemed to get home and be coddled ; to have dainty dishes set before him ; to be petted and spoiled.

Jerry was prepared to see a change in Margery, but not so great a one. Her hair was just cropping out, her eyes were dull and sunken, her cheeks hollow and white, and her step tottering and slow. Jerry could have cried when he saw the change disease had wrought, but she tried so hard to be her merry old self that for her sake he smothered his melancholy forebodings, and told her she was still worth more than all the roly-poly girls in New York.

He took her to drive every day, and was as tender of her as Dr. Young could desire, and it really did seem as though the week he was at home did wonders towards the girl's recovery.

During vacation week, as Patrick was one day cutting across lots, hurrying from the village to escape an approaching storm, and thinking by so doing to reach home before being overtaken, a loud peal of thunder caused him to pause and look about him, a vivid flash, then another terrific explosion almost stunned him ; the rain began to fall in heavy drops and he sought shelter under a large maple. As he stood uncertain what course to pursue, another flash, another peal, and then a crackling and roaring made him look in the direction from whence came the noise, and he saw an old oak tree twist and writhe and then fall to the earth. The sight was one of awe and grandeur.

As he looked at the warring elements, the swaying trees, the pouring rain, the falling twigs, he was startled to see something white flutter to his feet. He stooped and picked up a folded paper; a *letter*; but so blackened and muddy as not to show the date or address. Pat looked and scratched his head, half inclined to believe it was some communication from the upper world. At length he found voice to express himself in this wise:

"Begorrah! and if it's from the sperrets, I'll be none the wiser 'til I open it and read for myself the message. It may be from Biddy's own self. Sure, she may have gone to the ither world and found out me secret." Here Pat tore open the envelope and slowly and laboriously read the following letter, becoming so interested as not to heed the still steadily falling rain. He stood with his back against the tree, and somewhat shielded from the rain which was driving from the opposite direction, he read as follows:

"*My Precious Boy*:—You *have* been neglected, though not intentionally, as you must know. I left it to Amy to keep you informed of Margery's condition, and she, it seems, thought I had written you. Ah, my boy, when the dark wings of the Death angel are overshadowing some loved one, the terrible suspense and waiting for some change prevents one from being able to collect their thoughts, for every nerve is on a strain. Thanks be to heaven, our prayers are now answered and our dear girl is past the crisis. You will be glad to know that she has asked for you already, and when told you would soon be home for Easter vacation, she faintly moaned, "I shan't see Jerry till I am less of a scarecrow, he won't like me

now." Poor girl! she is a mere shadow of her old self, but already begins to relish some dainties, and the doctor says will soon try to eat us out of house and home. If she is strong enough, she, too, will be confirmed with you and Linny, and that will please us all. I am so proud and happy that my two darlings are so willing and ready to take up the cross and follow the Master. Trials are sure to come to you, and if you have such a rock to anchor to, you will not encounter any storm too severe to weather. You have been to me always, my dear boy, a comfort, and now you are about to crown my life with a more perfect joy than it has before known. I have never doubted your honor and integrity, but the world will be better able to judge your true colors when you show your willingness to become a disciple of Christ, and set a worthy example to others.

"I must not forget to tell you that your friend Jimmy McGinnis" (here Pat gave a great start, and his eyes fairly bulged from their sockets, as he hurried on), "has been to enquire for Margery almost every day. You know they used to be quite good friends. Your uncle Jerome says, 'Jimmy is going to make a very valuable man at the store,' and since his mother's death seems so sedate and thoughtful, goes to Sunday school and church, and he and Dick are fast friends."

Pat sat down on the wet and muddy ground; his knees would no longer support him. "Jimmy McGinnis!" he repeated again and again. "It must be my own Jimmy, and sure this is a letter from the sperret world."

"It's dated New York, March 15; it's me ould home, and sure, is me Biddy gone wid all her blackguarden

ways into the prisence of the Almighty? Lord save her soul, she was a tough un, but I'll go and find me boy, and be a father til him, if he's after wanten one."

Then Pat sat and mused long before finishing the letter, which concluded as follows, and which, the reader has learned, was Jerry's letter, which had become dislodged from its hiding place in a crotch in the oak tree, and which the limb had obscured from Jerry's view

"Linny is progressing in her studies most admirably. Her governess is a very competent woman and takes as much pleasure in imparting knowledge as her pupil in receiving it. The doctor is growing very impatient, and we will soon have to yield him our darling. Ah, me! this is but the beginning of the end. In a few years our little circle will begin to assume a very different aspect. You already know of your uncle's laying siege to Miss Dexter's heart, and her acceptance. He is even less patient than Dr. Young. Then how soon my boy will be a man and choosing a life partner. I already see the dream faces of the happy future, for I will not think of it otherwise.

With prayers, love and kisses for you always,

MOTHER."

It took Patrick a long time to study out this epistle, but he felt himself a new man when he had waded through it. He felt his heart stir within him at thought of some tie of blood to make life less lonely and desolate. He determined at once to find his son, for he had no doubt the Jimmy referred to was the boy he had deserted five years ago.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE week following Jerry's return to school found him a new boy. He had left the home folks all in a happy condition, and was so himself. His uncle was to take the family to his summer cottage at Cape May; Miss Dexter was to go as Mrs. Heartwell, and Margery was to go and recruit in the sea breezes. This would be a novelty to Jerry as well as to Margery, and they had much to think and talk of in the happy anticipation.

Mrs. Stubleton was busy with the sewing; for with two young girls to prepare for a summer at the seashore it required all her own as well as the dress-maker's time. Mr. Heartwell insisted upon furnishing Margery's wardrobe likewise, and although Miss Dexter gave her assistance when out of school hours, yet the brunt of the labor and planning fell upon good Mrs. Stubleton. Her own wants were slender; a couple of black silks, with a number of white wrappers, and a tea gown or two were all she required. Miss Dexter desired no more, but her lover showed a pride in her toilets that was quite laughable. He insisted upon selecting the wedding gown, which proved an elegant affair, being of gray satin brocade of richest texture, and adorned with exquisite point lace. She looked so fresh and rosy when she donned it to see if there were any alterations needed, that Mrs. Stubleton and Margery both went into rhapsodies over her youthful beauty.

One morning as Jerry was passing through the hall he encountered Patrick, who stopped him and asked: "Master Jerry, would yez be after tellin' me yer father's business in the city of New York."

"My father is not living," quietly responded Jerry.

"Ow! is that thrue? I'm sorry fer yer, me boy."

Jerry did not assent to this, but was hastening on, when his questioner again accosted him. "I'm going to ask every boy that comes from that city, fer I'm goin' back, and I want to get somethin' to keep soul and body together 'til I find me boy." Then Jerry became interested and asked numerous questions, until it finally came out that Pat had had a message from the "sperrets," and that his boy Jimmy was in the city.

Jerry asked how he got the message from the other world, and thereupon Pat told the whole story and produced the letter.

Jerry eagerly seized it and devoured its contents, then exclaimed, "Why, man alive! Jimmy McGinnis is a friend of mine, and works in my uncle's store, and this is my long-lost letter. Spirits indeed! Pat, you must have been imbibing spirits to be such an idiot."

Jerry promised to aid Pat all in his power, and it soon came about that the father and son were to meet at Mr. Heartwell's residence, where, away from the gaze of curious eyes, they might show their emotions, and tell their sad stories to each other unmolested.

Two weeks passed and Jerry had written all the particulars to his uncle, who in his turn did all the planning for the meeting. Jerry had a talk with the principal of the school, who said he would not like to part with Patrick for he had proved a steady, reliable man, and had been with them for four years, having

come as a tramp and obtained a job of wood-sawing, which he did so expeditiously and so thoroughly that other tasks followed, and then he became gardener, hostler, and man of all work. He had been very reticent concerning his past history, and it was generally believed that he was not a family man. The Professor gave Patrick a letter of recommendation and bade him come back if he so desired; the place would be kept for him if he came within a reasonable time, and likewise if he desired to bring his son to the school he might do so at reduced rates; which all went to show that however lowly one's position in life, if honesty and industry are conscientiously carried out, one can become an essential element in his station.

At seven o'clock, on a dull, drizzly, April day, a man of about forty years, rough and weather-worn, clothed in an ill-fitting suit of homespun, though clean-shaven, and with a white shirt, collar, and cuffs, rang the bell at Mr. Heartwell's residence. He was ushered into the library, where Mr. Heartwell sat reading.

"Is this Mr. McGinnis?" queried the master of the house, at the same time rising and offering his hand.

"It is that same, your honor, sir," returned Pat, for he it was.

"Well, Mr. McGinnis, I am glad to say that you have a boy to be proud of."

"Sure, sir, and I'm not the man to be thanked for any of Jimmy's good qualities; I have been a onnatural father, fer I deserted me wife and me boy, but I was driv' to it, sir; I really was."

"I'm not so sure of that, my friend. You should have remained for your son's sake."

"True, sir; true, sir."

Here the door opened, and Jimmy was ushered in, as he supposed to have an interview with Mr. Heartwell, not having been told of the relationship so near at hand.

Mr. Heartwell arose and said: "Jimmy, I have sent for you to meet a gentleman whom you have a great interest in, and whom you have not met in a long time. He comes to speak to you of your father."

"Yes, sir," was the boy's reply, looking questioningly at the stranger meanwhile.

"Do you remember yer father, me boy?" questioned the man.

Then Jimmy exclaimed, "*You* are my father!" and the two grasped hands, while tears choked their utterance.

Mr. Heartwell quietly withdrew, and the father and son remained closeted together for a long time, recounting their experiences during the years of separation.

At ten o'clock they took their departure for Jimmy's quarters. It was the lad's desire to remain with Mr. Heartwell, where he could earn a fair income, having no fancy for school, further than the one of his employer's origin, where he declared he could learn all that was necessary of reading, writing, spelling, and figures.

They laid the matter before Mr. Heartwell, who agreed with Jimmy, and who eventually secured a position as coachman for Mr. McGinnis, in a well-to-do family of his acquaintance. And so, through Jerry, was brought about another singular meeting. The father and son seemed to grow very fond of each other as the days went by, and in the course of two years the old fellow became very much attached to the cook where he was in service—she being a child.

less widow, rosy and good natured—and when he proposed, was accepted; she became his wife when he had secured a place as gardener. Her savings bought them a little cottage, and a cow. Jimmy boarded at home, and for the first time in his life enjoyed a home and a good woman's care.

CHAPTER XXIX.

OH, the delicious salt water breezes! How they invigorate! How they stir one into fresh life! Jerry, Margery, Amy, and Mr. and Mrs. Heartwell were in the surf every day, Mrs. Stubleton and Linnet preferring the sandy beach or the pavilion, where they could inhale the air and listen to the merry clatter and splashing of the hundreds who were, like themselves, seeking surcease from care and city noises.

Mr. Heartwell was brimming over with happiness. His bride beamed on him with all the luxuriousness of young love, he being her "first, last and only." The young folks nodded, winked and smiled very knowingly many times a day at the artless manner of the old lovers.

Mr. Heartwell spent part of his time in the city, as he never neglected business for pleasure. Jerry often accompanied him, as his uncle was anxious for him to become learned and interested in the ways of mercantile affairs, proposing at no distant day to take the boy in as partner.

One day in July as Amy, Margery, and Mr. Heartwell were taking a swim bath, for he had taught the girls until they were quite expert, Amy became so infatuated that she kept going out further and further, until happening to turn, she perceived she was alone, the many other bathers keeping in the surf nearer the shore. Her father was teaching a party of young

ladies how to swim, and supposed she was, as usual, near by.

Amy was startled when she perceived her distance from the rest of the party, and doubtless that fact served to unnerve her, for soon after turning, she began to falter in the evenness of her strokes and then lost her head entirely.

Her senses began to swim and she threw up her arms with a piercing cry just as her father became aware of her wandering. He heard, and grew sick with fear as he saw his darling sink from sight. He struck out heroically and was fast lessening the distance between them, but still Amy did not reappear.

It was at this moment that the surfman patrolling with his life boat caught sight of the agonized features of Mr. Heartwell. He took to his oars and pulled rapidly for what he supposed was a drowning man, though not understanding the strength exhibited if such was the case.

Mr. Heartwell, perceiving him as he came alongside shouted to him, "My daughter has sunk beneath the waves; for God's sake, help me before it is too late."

Then twenty feet away, in towards shore, Amy's brown head was seen to rise, and with desperate strokes the oarsman pulled toward her and grasped her braided locks.

She was soon in the boat and her father beside her. When they reached the shore many white faces stood in speechless anxiety. Margery was cowering in a wet heap on the sand, her face buried in her hands, while several ladies stood by trying to brace her for the result, as Amy, white and senseless, was borne to the nearest hotel, where aid was speedily rendered.

It was long before the poor girl revived, but at last their efforts were rewarded, and she opened her eyes and smiled wanly. Then her great, strong, tender-hearted father burst into tears and rained kisses upon her cheeks, lips, and brow.

She caressed him in return, and patted his face fondly, bidding him "Never mind, she was all right again," and declaring she would not try to show off again.

It was a whole week before Amy ventured again into the water, and then her father became her shadow.

Tom, hearing of the adventure through Jerry, came down at the latter's earnest invitation and remained a few days at the shore. He was considerably wrought up over Amy's narrow escape from a briny grave, and actually turned white whenever the matter was alluded to. "It proves to me conclusively that his heart is a good deal touched," said Margery one evening to Jerry as they were swinging in the hammock after tea, Tom and Amy at the time promenading on the beach walk. Mr. and Mrs. Heartwell had gone to drive. Mrs. Stubleton was seated in a garden rocker listening to the chat of "her silly children," as they commented on the absent lovers, for Linnet and Dr. Young came in for a round share, they also being out for a drive.

"Fact is, they are all wishy-washy, and romantically silly but you and I, Mag—and—mother!" at which the three laughed merrily, and Mrs. Stubleton remarked that "people who lived in glass houses shouldn't throw stones."

The days and weeks went hurrying by. The usual

number of hearts were thrilled by lovers' vows, and torn by doubts and jealousies. The usual number were broken and misplaced, and the world jogged on seemingly unmindful of the pangs of woe, the cries of agony always ascending from some poor human heart.

CHAPTER XXX.

LET us pass over an uneventful year and bring our readers face to face with Linnet's wedding day. A bright rosy September morning, a crisp freshness following a night of rain. Birds and flowers filled the windows and recesses of the long parlor where the ceremony was to take place. Behind a mass of tropical plants was stationed a band of musicians: their instruments being such as to make the softest, sweetest music—violin, zither, flute, and harp.

The guests, some fifty intimate friends besides the relatives, were all that Linnet desired, and her wishes were consulted and carried out on all points pertaining to the occasion.

At ten o'clock the band struck up a march, and down the stair, across the hall and through the back parlor to the archway leading into the front room, where hung a massive bell composed of white chrysanthemums, the bridal party wended its way. The bride in her pure loveliness, arrayed in white satin, with a tulle veil enveloping her chaste and girlish figure, an exquisite necklace of pearls being the only ornament adorning her person, leaned on the arm of her uncle. Mrs. Stubleton followed with the bridegroom, then came Margery and Amy, the charming bridesmaids, with Jerry and Tom, who were best men. The man of God stood waiting, and as the group arrayed themselves in proper form, joined the

happy pair in holy wedlock. Then followed congratulations, and the wedding breakfast.

Tears were chasing each other down the cheek of our kind old Italian friend as he sat in an obscure corner of the room, when Jerry espied him, and coming up said, "Why do you take it so to heart? Linny is not going to leave us."

"Ah, my boy, she has left *me*, she is no longer my Peroi, and my old heart is well nigh breaking."

"Oh, tut! tut!" cried Jerry, "You would make Linny's heart ache did she know you felt so; why she loves *you* next to mother; *I* am nowhere!" and Jerry lifted his brows, and whined in mock distress.

His friend took his yellow silk handkerchief—a gift of his dear pupil—and brushed away his tears, and smiled at the boy who so earnestly strove to comfort him. Then Jerry took him by the arm and was leading him toward the breakfast room, when they encountered Mrs. Stubleton, who exclaimed: "Here you are, Linny has been asking for you, and says she can't get along without her right hand man." At this a broad smile illumined the Italian's face and he looked serenely happy.

Jerry heard a trilling voice behind him and turned back to meet Margery, who was coming down the stairs, whither she had gone for her auntie's fan. "Ah, Mag, just waiting for you, come this way; they are all at the feast but you and I," and he took her by the hand and led her through the parlor, under the snowy bell where he paused, and before she was aware of his intention he put his arm quickly about her waist and snatched a kiss from her cheek. "There! you know the sign," he cried.

"Know what sign?" said the rosy maid. "I think you are a very impertinent boy," and she snatched herself away, and ran back up the stairs all of a tremble.

"Now I've made a mess of it," mused Jerry. "One never knows how a girl is going to act, they are so contrary. 'Spose Mag won't look at me for two long hours. Well, I couldn't help it, and I'd do it again if the circumstances offered. Little goose! she knows I love her, and why not show it? I'm not going to hang around forever, only within speaking distance."

Just here Margery tripped up to him and laughing lightly said, "Come, I'll forgive you if you will be good in future; let's go and join the guests, who are having a merry time, judging from the noise that issues from the other room," and Jerry went in as beaming as the Italian.

Among the wedding gifts was a house and lot to the bride from Mr. Heartwell, furnished throughout in simple elegance. A charming alcove room adjoining that of the young couple was set apart for Mrs. Stubleton, who of course was to live with her daughter.

The house was within two blocks of Mr. Heartwell's residence, a two-story brick, built in modern style and containing but eight rooms. Linnet's life was from choice rather an isolated one; she had a shrinking from society, and was happiest when surrounded by her own immediate circle of friends.

Dr. Young's practice was rapidly growing; he was by nature so gentle and sympathetic, so quiet and unobtrusive, that he won the hearts of his patients

from the moment he entered the room. His voice had a deep, mellow intonation very soothing to the nerves of the sick, and his prompt, confidential way of taking hold of a case, quickly gained their reliance on his ability.

"Come, my Linnet, let us wend our way to your new cage," said her husband, as, an hour after the ceremony, he drew her to his side and softly kissed her dainty hand. "You are looking flushed and tired," he continued, "and your mother suggests retirement to the quiet of your own little nest."

"I am more than willing, my dearest," she replied, and then the coach was ordered and soon they were speeding to their new abode.

When Linnet entered her own home, such a longing took possession of her to look upon her treasures of mother, husband, and home, that she gave way to tears, and dropping her head on her husband's shoulder sobbed uncontrollably for some minutes.

Her mother and husband knew the cause and felt deep grief for their darling, but waited for her excitement to pass before endeavoring to soothe her, save by gentle caresses.

Some hours later, when she had regained her wonted composure, her mother took her over the house and gave a minute description of each room and its belongings; from that hour Linnet was as thoroughly at home in the knowledge of her possessions as any happy bride whose keen eyes daily and hourly roam over her kingdom.

Dr. Young never gave up hope that his wife's sight might some day be restored. He never disclosed to her his faith, for it hung on a fragile stem, and he

knew the dire consequences which might follow did she build her hopes in vain.

He constantly read and studied on the subject, and consulted other physicians, who when they learned the cause of his wife's blindness, gave him the same faint hope that he himself cherished.

The days and weeks went by after this eventful marriage, in quiet, peaceful monotony. Daily the families interchanged calls, the older bridal pair as blissfully content as the younger.

Jerry had returned to his school with Tom ; Amy and Margery pursued their studies without interruption, letters from "the boys," being their chief diversion, for Tom had asked and obtained permission to write to Amy, who gave his letters to her father to read, in a confiding way very agreeable to that doting parent. Margery as dutifully read her's to her auntie, but they were too precious to be *handled* by other than her own fingers.

We will glance over her shoulder and read one of Jerry's latest effusions, which read as follows :

" *My dear Maggie*:—Yours rec'd yesterday, and like a good boy I am up at the unearthly hour of five A. M., inditing a reply. I was booked for an article in the 'School Register' for this week, and as I could not slumber nor sleep in consequence, I thought I would spite Morpheus by getting up and turning my back on him.

"I come to you for help. You know I never had an original idea in my life, and so I told the Prof., but the hardened wretch merely looked daggers at me and made the unkind remark, 'Go to the ant thou slug-

gard.' I confess I don't see the application, and if he meant for me to ask your aunt, I might have said, I prefer the niece. Anyway, I want you to give me a few pointers, and be as lucid as possible, sweetheart, (now don't get wrathful—that was a *lapsus linguæ*—from the root of my heart). Tom and I were caught in a terrific storm yesterday and I am, in consequence of getting a soaking, as hoarse as a frog—don't tell Muz, she'll worry, and I'll be all right in a day or two. The Prof's. wife is dosing me with soothing syrup and is as attentive as a setting hen. How is the fair bride enjoying her new home? Tell Amy that Tom is limping to-day on crutches—turned his weak ankle in our race to escape the storm and thereby delayed us, causing us to catch it all; next time we'll bear in mind 'haste makes waste.'

"Good-bye. I must begin my literary effort, but don't you fail to send assistance *immediately*."

"Yours forever and ever, amen,

"JERRY."

CHAPTER XXXI.

MARGERY read her letter with conflicting emotions.

Jerry was ill ; Jerry was calling for help ; Jerry was getting spooney. What was to be done ? I'll ask auntie, she is not beyond smypathizing with us, and Amy, too, may be able to suggest something beneficial.

So Margery sailed out of the library calling, " Amy ! Amy ! where are you ? "

" Here," called a smothered voice from the parlor, and going thither Margery found Amy with her pet spaniel snuggled up to her face, lying on the sofa—too comfortable to move, or exert herself, but at sight of a letter in her friend's hand she hastily sprang up.

" Oh, it isn't for you, my dear," laughed Margery, " only a message, and I want your advice." But Amy was so chagrined and disappointed when she heard the letter was not for her, and learned its rueful contents, that she cuddled down again with her favorite, saying, " Oh, don't ask me ; I am tormented to death over my own compositions. Its awfully stupid and selfish in Jerry to make such demands, Tom wouldn't be so inconsiderate."

" Oh, of course, Tom is perfection ; but all the same he is always glad of Jerry's assistance," and with a sniff of displeasure very rarely manifested in Margery's disposition, she stalked out of Amy's presence.

Going to her auntie she said, " I'm a perfect bear to-day, and I want you to scold me."

"What for, dearie; I have seen nothing amiss."

And then the tears burst forth and Margery explained how she had allowed her tongue to run away with her, and hurt Amy's feelings.

"O, tut, tut, my child! dry your tears, and we'll see what advice to give the boy. He needs to concentrate his ideas, and apply himself a little more vigorously to his studies, and it seems to me he need not lack for material to write about. He can give a description of the storm and its effects upon himself and Tom if nothing else."

Margery finally sat herself down and wrote the following letter:

"*Dear 'Corporal Stub':*—Instead of writing '*Corporal*,' I *should* be writing *Lieutenant*. I fully expected to so designate you after two years' military experience! but what can one expect of a boy who wants a girl to help him write essays! I am shocked and grieved."

Now Margery in the beginning had no intention of berating her friend in this way; but she was spurred on by the sneer in Amy's tone, and the disapproval in her aunt's. Margery could bear to be snubbed herself, but that any one should imply, even remotely, that Jerry was shirking, or was not "true blue," was more than she could or would bear meekly, so the vials of her wrath were turned on poor, unsuspecting Jerry, who was, after all, only joking, and feeling inclined to put off the evil day, as boys and girls have a way of doing.

"I am very sorry to hear that you and Tom are the worse for your exposure. Do be more careful, you

know how it worries your dear mother when anything goes wrong with you. Tell Tom, Amy is in the dumps in consequence of his limping on crutches; in fact we are all leaden-hued since getting your letter, or at least the atmosphere seems to be thick and heavy. Linnet and her shadow—the doctor—were here and spent last evening. Oh, they seem so blissfully happy—like two children in the delightful *mud-pie* era! Do you remember that period of your existence, my boy? Did you strip off your shoes and stockings and let your heels and toes do duty until the mass was of a proper consistency for your palms and fingers? and then did you fashion all sorts of delicacies, as well as the finest specimens of crockery? and even going so far as to design a new people, with perhaps but a stump for a body, and claws for hands, a beak for a nose, and how imposing the long rows would look as they unfalteringly faced the glaring, parching sun! What a healthy color they were, as well as their originator. Happy, happy days! *Not* gone forever, for when I go to the country next summer—I'm going out on a farm with a school friend of mine—I intend to dabble in mud pies again. If you'll promise to be good, I'll bring you a trunk full of specimens! Your mother has just come for auntie to go to the school. Those two women are never so elated as when off on some work of charity, their faces beam and glow with the *peace of God*. Good-bye, my boy.

“MARGERY.”

When Corporal Stubleton received this epistle, he was just in the act of putting the finishing touches to an able essay on “Ludovico Cornaro, an Italian, born

in the fifteenth century, who, when a youth, was much given to riotous living, having abundant means at his command, and fond of sensual pleasures, wine-drinking, and all the gross indulgences common to his class, but who at the age of twenty-five became afflicted with dyspepsia, gout, and frequent low fevers. Physicians could do nothing for him, and warned him finally of a brief hold on life unless he mended his ways, and lived a life of simplicity and temperance. This was not congenial to his tastes, and he persisted in the old course. Its punishments followed ever, until at the age of forty he seemed a physical wreck. At this crisis he resolved to become abstemious and temperate, even resorting to prayer for aid in keeping his virtuous resolutions. In less than a year his efforts were rewarded, and he became freed from his torturing diseases, to the surprise of all his friends. So happy was he in his complete restoration that no inducements could ever persuade him to return to his luxurious mode of life. A simple diet, regular hours, a virtuous, conscientious life, gave to him the peace and content that no amount of wealth could purchase. He lived a busy life, believing that occupation is necessary to health and happiness. He improved his lands for the good of his tenants, beautifying and purifying their surroundings, even taking active part in the labor. He wrote essays on health, and sketches of his own life, agriculture, architecture, etc. At eighty-three, he wrote, 'Joy and peace have so firmly fixed themselves in my bosom, that they never depart from it.' Again he exclaims, 'Oh, thrice holy sobriety, thou hast conferred such favors on thine old man, that he better relishes his dry bread than he did the choicest dainties

of his youth.' At eighty-five he wrote a comedy full of innocent mirth and pleasant jest, and so full of enjoyment was this old man, that he declares 'he would not exchange life with any young man who seeks pleasure through the indulgence of appetite.' He lived to be one hundred and four years old, and passed painlessly from life, as he predicted. His wife, who was nearly as old, soon followed. They rest in St. Anthony's Church, Padua, in a very unostentatious manner, according to their expressed desire."

Jerry wound up his essay by exhorting his fellow students to go and do likewise, as he fully intended carrying out for himself the good old man's advice.

This essay brought a round of applause for Jerry when it was read, and was highly commended by his instructors, who really believed Jerry meant to abstain from anything inconsistent with true manhood. His record at the school was clean and pure. He was frank, honest, and always reliable.

He was never known to descend to any subterfuges, or mean, underhanded ways so common among a certain class of school-boys.

Jerry scorned deceit, yet he never thrust himself forward, or in any way tried to be conspicuous—another failing boys have.

Jerry put Margery's letter aside with a contemptuous "Humph! Writes as though I were a child to be scolded, and then soothed with a sugar plum. Never mind, it's Mag, and so I'll be magnanimous, and consider the source! 'Going to a farm,' eh? We'll see, when vacation comes, my lady. Ah! I have an idea; I'll hire out as a farm hand—go in disguise. *Bully!* I'll do it."

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE months rolled around bringing the Christmas holidays, when the families were reunited. Tom and Jerry were seldom seen one without the other; their friendship was becoming more and more of a David and Jonathan character, which was gratifying to the relatives on either side, for there were many commendable traits in each of the boys—Jerry's candor and courage offsetting Tom's more diffident and secretive nature; Jerry's religious tendencies acting often as a restraint upon Tom's love of mischief and inclination to get the better of his teachers. Jerry's conscientiousness was often a check to Tom's thoughtlessness. And so each was influencing the other's life unconsciously. Neither had any evil habits, such as using liquors or tobacco, and they were as pure in thought and speech as their sisters.

So Mr. Heartwell watched the friendship springing up between his Amy and Jerry's friend without a thought of distrust or opposition.

The four, Jerry and Margery, Tom and Amy, were a happy quartette, and every day there was some diversion, either skating, tobogganing, sleighing or other innocent and healthful amusement.

At the annual Christmas party these four worked like soldiers in decorating the school-room with evergreens, and making the various mottoes suitable for the occasion. Then each one spoke some piece, which to these unlettered people was a great accomplish-

ment, for each of the four had studied elocution and Delsarte exercises enough to act out in a very attractive manner their selections, which were all rather simple, being chosen for the understanding of the company, Tom's being something with a funny brogue, Amy reciting "Katy Lee and Willie Gray," Jerry something heroic, and Margery, a sweet pathetic piece that brought tears to all eyes.

Linnet and her old Italian friend furnished some exquisite music; he was no longer seedy and needy, for these kind friends had secured for him many pupils, who in their turn brought others, until the once obscure musician was thronged with classes. His happy face and well-to-do bearing plainly expressed the change that had been wrought, and he was able to lay up for the winter of life, which was fast approaching.

Dick was the moving spirit at this time. He was everywhere present, and singing or whistling in the abandon of a free spirit; he and Tom and Jerry were each blessed with a good voice, but were rather averse to any exhibition of their ability to sing; however, on this occasion they had had several secret meetings, and even the girls, Amy and Margery, were not permitted to know what was up, until the evening was half over, when, during a lull in the games, Mr. Heartwell announced:

"Something new will now be served if the company will be seated and remain very quiet."

Instantly there was silence and eager expectation. Then from behind a screen issued three grotesque figures, black as midnight—having beaks and wings. These queer fowls silently strutted one by one to the

front of the platform where they stood side by side; then flapping their wings in chorus sang: "Caw, caw, caw." After which they slowly folded their wings and standing solemn and stiff, sang:

"There were three crows sat on a tree,
And they were black as black could be.

"Said one old crow unto his mate,
What shall we do for grub to eat?"

Many verses followed until one old crow sang out;

"Though snow and sleet be in the air,
Heartwell bounty is everywhere."

Again flapping their great wings they moved off singing in chorus:

"For snow and sleet we do not care,
Heartwell bounty is everywhere."

Such a cheering and clapping was never before heard in the old school-room, and best of all was the utter surprise of Mr. Heartwell. He was convulsed with laughter as were the majority of the assembly, and when his name came out so unexpectedly, a wild cheer rent the air, and handkerchiefs were waved aloft until the three black crows were obliged to come before the curtain and give another "Caw, caw, caw."

When the boys presented themselves in proper person again, they were surrounded with an appreciative body, and "covered with glory," Jerry declared, "so deep that they could hardly wade through."

Mr. Heartwell had laughed until he was as red as a

lobster, and continually mopped the perspiration from his beaming face.

He and Mrs. Heartwell shook the boys by the hand and declared it was better than the opera.

At the close of the evening Mr. Heartwell gave his usual address, and bade them all live worthily through the coming year that they might be ready at a moment's notice if the Master sent for them. He welcomed Jimmy and his father, saying they were a happy addition to their little band, and commended Dick for his laudable opening address. When he had finished, the three boys, assisted by the Italian as accompanist sang, "Good Night," each taking a part.

Their voices blended beautifully, and gave the guests a feeling of gentle tranquillity as they quietly dispersed, believing more than ever in the Christ-like religion of their benefactor.

A few days after, good-byes were said and the boys regretfully returned to their school, where they pursued the even tenor of their ways for many months; where we shall leave them for the present, becoming more manly, more mature in thought and judgment each day.

The friendship, the correspondence growing out of it between these youths and the two modest maidens, Margery and Amy, was constantly bearing good fruit. They strove always to emulate one another, there was no feeling of rivalry or coquetry, but a true, warm girl and boy friendship such as we need more of for the perfecting of manly and womanly character.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A HUSH was over the household of Dr. Young. He, with two brother physicians of eminence, was fighting the death angel.

Linnet's life hung by a thread. Into the great wide world she had sent forth a little human barque. But the effort had well nigh wrecked her own life.

Skilful and loving hands were doing all that lay in human power; hearts were breathing forth burning prayers for the dear one's restoration.

It was a struggle, and although she went down into the valley of the shadow, where she could almost see the extended arms of the angel brother waiting on the other shore, Linnet returned to those who with crushed hearts were momentarily waiting to see her take her heavenward flight.

Linnet lived. Linnet held close to her heart God's gift of life, and with eyes that never before had seen the light of day, Linnet gazed in rapture on her beautiful babe! Thrice happy mother! Thrice happy household. Mrs. Stubleton, when the truth was made known to her, hastened from her daughter's presence, fearing her emotion might excite unduly the loved one, and throwing herself on her knees beside her bed, sobbed out her grateful thanks to Almighty God!

When she became sufficiently calm she returned to Linnet, and folding her in a quiet embrace kissed the

dear lids that had at last unveiled the windows where now the soul could shine forth undimmed.

Linnet's lips scarce opened that they did not express her sublime peace and gratitude. Her husband was so moved that his lips could only quiver in his attempt to utter his joy at the realization of his hopes.

Great was the rejoicing at the Heartwell's, and indeed throughout their wide circle of friends no happier tidings could have been circulated.

Gifts of rare and costly texture as well as those of homeliest and simplest manufacture came pouring into the young monarch, along with loving words and congratulations to the happy mother.

Nothing would do, as soon as the babe had "got its eyes open," as Jerry expressed it, but to have a picture of the mother and child, which the brother declared he "*must* have, and in life size, to hang in his room to represent the Madonna and infant."

Raphael would have gloried in such a subject, for Linnet's beauty, so famed for its spirituality, was nearer than ever divine, since her eyes shone in their heavenly light, warmth and expression.

The babe was christened after its great uncle, who was so proud and fond of the young Jerome that he could not pass the house without stopping to admire the youngster, who, when he grew to handle his chubby fists, made sad work of Uncle Jerome's carefully tended beard, and pulled handfuls of hair from his none too luxuriant crop. However, it was baby, and baby was king.

The little mother's discipline was sadly tested when

great Uncle Jerome, with his big-heartedness, upset all her fine theories by his indulgence.

When Linnet's singing teacher came a week after the new arrival to learn how "his child," as he always called her, was prospering, he learned the great news: "Linnet was a mother!" "Linnet was no longer blind!"

The old man fell on his knees and while the tears ran down his cheeks cried out, "Great Master! how good thou art; I ask no more of life, O thou blessed one."

Mrs. Stubleton, who had told him the joyful tidings, was weeping softly in sympathy. When he was perfectly calm she took him in to see the happy pair.

He was as thoroughly in love from that moment as baby's great uncle, and found it as hard to remain away. However, the boy was not spoiled, but grew and thrived and had his way as every other babe that ever opened eyes on this beautiful world has done since the beginning of time.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

JERRY and Tom after spending four years at the military academy returned to New York. Jerry was taken in as junior partner in his uncle's store. Tom accepted a position in an attorney's office, having a predilection for the bar. The boys applied themselves with diligence and patience to their new vocations; their school discipline proving of great benefit.

Jerry was frequently sent on the road to collect from country customers. This relieved the otherwise monotonous and rather confining business of the young merchant.

But when working hours were ended, with what zest these two young men partook of social pleasures, which, as a rule, meant the society of Margery and Amy, who had also finished their school studies, and were now imbibing other useful lore. Margery seemed never so happy as when preparing some dainty dish for the table, or fashioning a new gown, or by way of diversity, donning a sweeping cap, and wielding the broom until her room shone with scrupulous care.

Amy's preferances ran in a different groove. She loved to read books of travel, and to dwell on the subject. Her father having promised her when she had mastered French and German that she should go abroad, the little woman had set to with a will, and her father soon realized that his promise must be kept.

Jerry was imbued with a like notion, which greatly gratified his uncle, he being anxious for his nephew to see the world, and thereby acquire much information and polish that can be gained in no other way.

It soon came about that Margery and Tom began to partake of Jerry's and Amy's enthusiasm, and would pick up a word now and then of the new languages, then whole sentences, until the happy quartette became so ambitious and so conceited that the older people declared there was no living under the same roof with them.

This caused a good-natured laugh and the young people expressed their determination to force their seniors into consent to accompany them abroad.

This, they asserted, was the one thing they desired to escape, as a party so pedantic and so egotistic would crush their spirits completely, they having so little knowledge of foreign languages and foreign manners.

So the harmless pleasantry and banter went on.

"Tom," called Jerry one afternoon as he stepped into the office of his friend, "I have an invite for you; Linnet and Doc want us up there to-night to meet some young nieces of his; they have just returned from Europe and I 'spose are awfully swell; so polish up your French and your boots and come over by eight o'clock; the girls will go with us of course."

"Goodness!" cried Amy, "I'm all in a flutter; I am always so rejoiced to meet travellers that I get in a tremble of excitement."

"I am nervous enough," demurely returned Mar-

gery, "but it's because I dread meeting strangers. I do wish I could get over this dreadful timidity."

"You will dear, after we have been across the *briny*," replied her confident friend, but even as she spoke a smell of singed hair caused her to jerk the iron with which she was curling her bangs, hastily from her head, and to howl in dismay as she saw adhering to the tongs the entire lock.

"Oh, destruction, and Tom Walker! what have I done? I can't go a step; I have ruined my looks! Margery, what *shall* I do?"

"You poor little soul!" came in pitying tones from Margery's tender heart. "It is just too bad," and she tried to brush and comb the other locks so as to hide the deficiency. No use, like quills upon the fretful porcupine stood that bristling, stubborn *stubble*.

Jerry and Tom, boy-like, laughed derisively at Amy's forlorn picture, but when they saw how really she was annoyed they tried in their awkward way to console her, Jerry telling her she couldn't look otherwise than fascinating if she burned off all her hair. Tom really felt this to be the truth, but he would not have so candidly expressed himself at that period of his infatuation for the mines of California.

"I'll tell you, dear, let me take the comb," suggested Mrs. Heartwell, who just then entered the room, and parting Amy's hair, boy fashion, soon transformed her into a very pretty and distinguished looking young woman.

"Oh, how much you resemble the picture of the Spanish boy; you must wear your hair so all the while, Amy," exclaimed Tom, quite charmed with

the novel style. The rest joined in his opinion, and quite consoled, Amy started out.

The nieces proved to be two very entertaining and intelligent young ladies, of agreeable manners, but not at all attractive in personal appearance. They were so amiable, and so unassuming that the young visitors were charmed and immediately put at ease.

"That's the polish one gets by travel," whispered Amy to Jerry, while the others were conversing about the difference in the customs and people of the old and the new country.

"Yes," returned Jerry, "I wonder if that will be said of us a few years hence."

"Of course," was his cousin's decisive reply, as she turned her attention to the others, and joined in the numerous questions propounded.

"I really am getting the craze myself," laughed Linnet when some of the charming scenes were depicted.

"Oh, there is so much to see, so much to live for," and her eyes gave an upward look of gratitude now very often observed by her near and dear friends. When the grand old pictures of the masters were touched upon, then the doctor cried, "Oh, now *I* am catching the fever."

"Oh, we shall have the whole family tagging after us, never fear," laughed Jerry.

"For shame," cried Margery. "What could be more glorious than a family picnic across the ocean."

"*We'll have it!*" and the doctor slapped his knee in a very emphatic way.

"What about King J?" asked his wife.

"Oh, leave him with his doting grandma, he can

take the trip when he earns it by a diligent course of study through college," replied her husband.

"That's fair," said Tom.

"You bet it is," responded his school-mate. "We can appreciate that sentiment."

The young nieces, who were quite proficient in music, gave some performances on the piano. Linnet sang and accompanied herself on the harp, which called forth ecstatic praise from the guests, who had never heard, in all their travels, a voice more divinely sweet.

The nieces were to rejoin their aunt—who was their chaperone—on the following day, and pursue their journey westward, as they were bent on comparing the scenery of Colorado and California with the charms of the Orient.

With many expressions of pleasure at the meeting, and its beneficial results the party separated.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE next morning while Jerry was wrestling with his neck-tie and wondering the while when that downy moustache would make a respectable appearance, a blood-curdling scream issued from the girls' room; Margery and Amy occupying the room above his own, he sleeping in the hall, bed-room on the first floor.

He sprang three steps at a time up the stairs, and on reaching the girls' room beheld them with frightened faces standing on a chair clutching each other frantically.

"What's up?" queried Jerry in alarm.

"O, I *don't know!* ask Amy," in an awed tone spoke Margery; "*she* screamed and jumped on the chair, and I followed—was it a mouse, dear?"

"I guess so, something as big as a mouse, anyway; it was *up my sleeve* when I put on my wrapper, and bit me when I put my hand on my arm to see what felt so queer. *Oh dear!*" and Amy fairly shook in her fright.

"Yes, and when I snatched off my gown and threw it from me, it fell with a dull thud, like a pinching bug, a toad, or a mouse I don't know which. O, Jerry! do try and find it and throw it out the window, we can't go down to breakfast until the horrid thing is found," and the two girls, cowering and trying to cover their bare shoulders with their hands, looked really pitiful.

Jerry marched boldly into the room, and snatching up the hastily discarded gown, held it aloft. Seeing nothing, he scanned the garment more closely and was rewarded by feeling something hard and oblong clinging to the inside of one of the sleeves.

"Oh-ho, you monster, come forth!" he cried, and turning the sleeve with one hand while he gripped the animal with the other, was on the point of bringing it to view, when he slung it from him exclaiming, "Ouch! you beast, you've got a stinger, sure."

Margery and Amy fairly danced up and down as they yelled for "help! help!"—but the family were in blissful ignorance partaking of the morning meal and wondering why those children did not make their appearance.

Jerry again, more cautiously, picked up the garment and giving it a shake was overcome with the humiliating knowledge that he had been frightened at a girl's *breast pin*!! He picked up a jet and gold twisted pin of Amy's and said, "*Ah!* one of the *gold bugs* of Australia; such as Mrs. Langtry wears on her classic breast. Allow me the felicity of presenting it with my apologies for intruding in your *boudoir*," and with a profound bow he left the shamefaced pair, and his "ha, ha, ha," was heard as he descended the stair.

"You goosey!" laughed Margery.

"You ditto," laughed Amy; "but how could it have got there?—Oh, yes, I stuck it there yesterday when I sat talking to you before dressing; how absurd."

A good laugh was indulged in when the story was related at the breakfast table, and it never failed to call forth the merriment of the trio when afterward alluded to. "Gold bug," uttered by some member of the family.

often had the effect to calm the groundless fears which young women are wont to indulge in. Uncle Jerome's portly person vibrated in jovial fashion whenever the subject was mentioned.

A few days subsequent to the above occurrence, as Mrs. Stubleton, who was an early riser, was making her toilette, a strange sound came from under her window: she raised the sash and listened; again a smothered, infantile cry was heard. She saw no one in sight but as the cry became louder and more prolonged she hastily donned her gown and noiselessly descended to the front door, from whence the sound seemed to proceed. On opening the door she discovered a market basket close up to the sill, containing what looked to be some one's laundry, a number of clean articles being neatly folded on the surface. Again the cry; this time there was no mistake in the location, and Mrs. Stubleton hastily picked up the basket, first glancing up and down the quiet street, but seeing no evidence of any person around, withdrew to the library, and there carefully inspected the basket and contents.

She uttered an exclamation of pleased surprise on finding a beautiful infant, dressed in fine material, though strictly plain; the little darling looking like a rosebud with the dew of the morning glistening on its petals, for its rosy cheeks were wet with tears, though as she lifted the little dainty cheese-cloth comforter with which it was wrapped, the wee tot smiled, and the blue eyes danced at the prospect of release and refreshment promised.

"You dainty darling!" exclaimed the motherly woman, "how could any mother desert so sweet a gift? Ah, here is a note, let us see what explanation it contains."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

SEATING herself in a low rocker with the babe on her knee, Mrs. Stubleton read the note which ran as follows :

*" Dear Mrs. Stubleton :—*I never knew until the day after my babe came, that I was not a lawful wife ; then I was told by a woman who came while my husband sat by my bedside and accused him of his crime. His guilt was too plain to be doubted ; I told him never to speak to me again. He left with his rightful wife, and my heart broke ; I do not want to live ; I have no near relatives, and knowing your love for the poor and unfortunate, I bring my babe to you in the belief that you will find for it a good home. I would, if I dared, take my darling with me, but my heart fails. When this note reaches you I will be beyond human woe ; so do not try to find me, dear friend of my happier days.

ELLEN MORRILL."

" Merciful God ! " exclaimed Mrs. Stubleton, " poor Ellen ! one of our brightest pupils—can it be too late ? it must *not* be." Laying her charge tenderly on the bed, she hastily ran to acquaint the doctor and have him go with her to the unhappy woman's room, with a bare chance of finding her still in her old quarters, for it was a year since she had been a member of Mrs. Heartwell's charity school.

She met her little grandson coming up the stair ; he called out, " Why, danma ! why don't you tum to your breaksup ; papa and mamma tired waitin'."

"I'm coming, love, as fast as I can," and the anxious woman hastened along, his hand in hers.

The story was told in as few words as possible. Linnet hastened to the little foundling while her mother and husband hastened with all speed to the unhappy mother.

They found her in her old apartments, which had been refurnished; and beside her, a young woman who lived with her parents in the same house, and of whom Ellen had rented her two rooms where she kept house, and until her supposed marriage, took in sewing. Her mother had recently died, leaving the young girl to battle alone. The man who had so basely deceived her was an uptown dry goods clerk, whom she usually dealt with when making purchases for her customers, who were fashionable people and who gave her many small commissions.

It was the old, old story. When her mother died he showed such sympathy and attention to the comely and attractive girl that her heart was won, and her marriage soon followed, making her supremely happy.

Oh, heart of man!

Adamantine must thou be,

To crush a heart remorselessly;

To win by stealth, pure-hearted love,

Then trample it. Oh, God above—

Why dost thou stay thy Avenging hand?

Crush out the traitors through the land.

"She is almost gone," whispered the young woman. "She would not let me call for help when I found her in a spasm a few minutes ago. She still grips my hand, see!" It was indeed a death-like clutch, but the doctor applied his remedies and worked over her so

faithfully for several hours, with the combined efforts of his mother-in-law, that they were at last rewarded by a conscious look; then a weak voice said, "Where is my baby?"

"Ah, that is something like," joyfully cried the doctor.

"Your babe is just now in a better condition than its mother, but she shall soon see for herself."

That same day the patient was removed to the hospital where Linnet owned a cot, and which was kept filled by some unfortunate of her finding.

To-day it was put at her disposal for Ellen Morrill, and a special nurse put in charge.

Every care was given the broken-hearted young mother, who caressed and talked in soft, sweet tones to her bonny babe from morn till eve.

Mrs. Heartwell was a daily visitor, bringing fruits and jellies to tempt the languid and fast-failing appetite. All in vain; at the end of three weeks poor Ellen Morrill sank sweetly to rest with the comforting assurance that her little one had found a blessed home in Mrs. Heartwell's tender arms.

The babe was christened Elsie Morrill Heartwell, and became the light of the household. "King J." became a devoted admirer, and as time passed and the twain grew, no happier pair of bairns ever frolicked together.

"Ah, wife, this little waif was heaven-sent, for what would our home be, now that our girls and boys are leaving our hearts, to nestle elsewhere?" said Mr. Heartwell one evening, as the young people hurried off after tea to talk of a trip to the country.

Margery's "farm trip" had long been postponed;

summer after summer other plans had broken in upon hers, and now she was saying to the group—Amy, Jerry, and Tom—"I am going next week! Oh, I can scarcely wait, I have talked of it so long. Amy won't you go, too? Kate writes for me to be *sure* and bring you."

"I really think I should enjoy it," replied Amy. "What shall we have to get?"

"Oh, I am going for a jolly time; rides on hay carts raking the meadows, Maud Müller fashion, horse-back rides, cow-boy style, etc., etc. I am going to have a tennis suit, or mountain suit, or whatever you choose to call it, and I'm not going to wear anything else," rattled the enthusiastic girl."

"I'll go, and do likewise, and we'll come back so fat and brown no one will know us," Amy replied; then the girls looked at the boys and laughed, for the two had nothing to say, being left out in the cold.

"You needn't look so forlorn, you can't go, and you mustn't whimper," teased Margery.

"Give us a rest," pleaded Tom. "We have our plans for a jolly tramp also, but we can keep *our* affairs to ourselves; eh, Jerry?"

"Right you are, old comrade; and now," stretching himself to his utmost height, Jerry continued, "remember, to-morrow I shall be twenty-one, and I am going around to see my mother, for I know she has something to say to me. Come, Maggie, will you walk with me?"

"Pretty cool," Amy whispered to Tom, in a very audible aside, and he replied:

"I was probing my wits to find a way to escape *them*; they have kindly spared my further attempts."

The happy faces that beamed in parting, showed the jest in their sallies, and as we can only give our undivided attention to one pair, let us saunter unseen behind Jerry and his companion, and play eaves-dropper.

They had gone but a few paces when Jerry took the hand that lay on his arm and said, very tenderly, "Maggie, I promised my mother not to speak until I reached my majority. It has been mortally hard, but I have held my tongue. I would have said it years ago, for I loved you then as I love you now; will you be my wife?"

She gave a low, musical laugh, as she said, without lifting her eyes, "Our hearts have spoken what our lips dared not utter, and you know my answer, my own Jerry."

The moon peeped from behind a cloud just then, but she never blushed nor hid her face when Jerry's arm stole around Mag's waist, and hastily snatching a lover's kiss, they pursued their way in silent bliss.

When Mrs. Stubleton greeted the happy children she knew it all, and her loving glance showed her approval.

An evening of sweet and quiet intercourse was passed, and then with congratulations from the doctor and his wife, the two returned to their home.

They entered the library for a few moments alone, as lovers have a way of doing before parting; but found Tom and Amy, whom they supposed in the parlor, just in the act of quitting the room.

Tom, with a guilty blush, withdrew his arm from Amy's waist as the door opened, but it was too late,

and Jerry said, as with manly pride he drew Margery to his side:

"It's all right old fellow, we happen to be just in time to give and receive each other's congratulations."

The girls kissed each other and cried a little, at least their lashes glistened in the gaslight, while the boys grasped each other warmly by the hand. They knew this would be the turn of affairs sooner or later; the four then sought Mr. and Mrs. Heartwell, and Amy cried, "Here we are, come for your blessing."

"Just what I have been looking for ever since the trip abroad was planned," said Mr. Heartwell, trying in vain to look severe. "You're a set of wild colts, and the sooner we turn you loose the sooner you will tame down; so I give my consent. Let us start you on your wedding journey at an early date, for two pairs of lovers in the house at one time will overcome the stoutest nerves."

"*Papa!* if we can stand *you*—who make the third pair of lovers—I think you need make no complaints, for you act really silly over that Elsie."

"Yes, we are all silly when it comes to our little sunbeam," he quietly acquiesced.

The morning of Jerry's twenty-first anniversary dawned cool, calm and bright, seemingly in sweet accord with the happy boy. Soon after breakfast his Uncle Jerome said to him, "Come my boy, I have a little business with you before I leave the house," and together they entered the library. Seating himself in a large arm chair, while Jerry drew near in a less comfortable one, Mr. Heartwell thus addressed him:

"You are to-day your own master; now with your permission I desire to carry out the proposition made

to you some years ago, which was, that you become my adopted son and take my name. Jeremiah Irving Heartwell will give you my initials, and when you become my successor the firm name can remain unchanged. "J. I. Heartwell" I desire it to be always: and when you marry, as you are soon likely to do, I trust you will have a son who will bear your name—"

"He shall bear yours, dear uncle," interrupted Jerry with much feeling in his voice.

"Thank you, my son; if he follows in his father's footsteps I shall be very proud of my namesake."

"And if he follows *his* namesake, I shall be more than proud of my boy."

"Enough of this," smilingly replied Mr. Heartwell. "Have I your ready consent to the adoption, and change of name?"

"I am more than willing to drop a name that bears ignominy and disgrace: but is my mother willing? It shall be as she desires," manfully spoke Jerry.

"Well spoken, my boy: your mother freely consents, and now let us go for her, and have this business settled." Which was accordingly done and thereafter, Jerry *Stubleton* was no more.

The first of August found Margery and Amy ensconced at Cherry Farm; a charming retreat on the Hudson. The girls were rustivating to their hearts, content, the trio riding horseback to drive home the cows, which was but an excuse for a daily canter; hunting after hens' nests, swinging under the fruit laden trees, and eating of the luscious pears, apples, black-hearts, peaches, etc., until they were gaining so fast they were obliged to loosen their corset strings,

but this they did on the sly, for no girl ever acknowledged the fact of having her corsets touch her. "Oh no; they could shake all around in them."

When they were retiring one evening, Amy said to her friend, "Margery, I would give all my possessions to see my Tom to-night—how is it with you?"

"Well, I was just thinking, it is a shame for us to be having such a delightful time and getting so fat and rosy, and those poor boys working in the hot city, and feeling so lost and lonesome. I feel real guilty, and if I wasn't so awfully fond of—of—pears and peaches, I'd pack up and go home!" said practical Margery, blushing at her own temerity.

"Oh, you horridly material creature!—and yet—I believe it is about the state of my own feelings—of course, we know the boys are well, and that we are only here for a little while, and—then, I think it will be so jolly when we *do* see them again, and I think they will appreciate us all the more for this absence," rattled Amy in an amusing apologetic manner.

"Yes, Jerry said in his last letter that he was perfectly woe-begone, and that he and Tom would take a run up the country this week and remain until our return."

"Yes, but it's queer he never mentioned where they were going for us to write to them."

"Well, that's their own look out, and I'm not going to worry. We'll hear again to-morrow," and Margery's regular breathing testified to her assertion that she was not going to worry.

"Dear Tom, how I love you," murmured Amy as she, too, fell asleep.

Their friend Kate, who slept in an adjoining room,

was aroused about two o'clock, by a call for "Help! Help!" from the girls' room; rushing in as soon as she could procure a light, she found Amy struggling to free herself from Margery's grasp. The latter, when fully awake explained that she had dreamed Jerry came, and that she put her arm around his neck and gave him a gentle embrace. Amy declared that she was awakened with a horrible sense of being strangled, and believed burglars were trying to murder her, hence her cry for help. The laugh was turned on poor Margery whose "gentle embrace" seemed so disastrous to Amy's slumbers, and Jerry was, thereafter, the recipient of much solicitude.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

SHORTLY after the early breakfast, Farmer Truesdall said to his wife, "Mary, I must go over to B—— and by hook or by crook get a couple of extra hands. Sam is laid up with a sore hand, Bill Tucker is on one of his drunks, and it threatens rain. I must get the grain under cover, or it will be a loss." Just as he finished speaking, as if in answer to his desire, two dust-worn travellers came up the road and halted at the gate.

"Good morning, sir," called one of the men, a stout well-built personage, dressed in a blue blouse, big easy jean pants, and a slouch hat.

"Good day," called back the farmer at the same time hastening forward with an eye to business.

"We are looking for work, sir," continued the first speaker, "can you direct us to Farmer Truesdall's; they told us at the station above, that he usually hired a number of extras, every season."

"Gosh-a-mighty! I'm your man, and if you *are* nothing but a pair of tramps I'll hire you for a few days anyhow. I'm just in need of two stout pairs of hands, but—" scanning the travellers narrowly—"Ye don't look as though ye had been used to working in the grain or hay fields, how is it?"

"Well," the spokesman of the pair replied, "we are not old hands at the business, but we're willing, and if you'll try us we'll work cheap and do our level best."

"Good! that's fair. I'll give you a dollar a day, and as good grub as can be found in the market. Ye look sort of fresh and young, both of you, and maybe you'll be the better for a spell of country work. Come from near the city, I reckon."

"Yes, sir."

The old gentleman, seeing their aversion to being further questioned, rattled on in his voluble way, "I've got two young women visiting here from the city, my daughter's friends. She used to go to school in New York. I don't mean to have her grow up in ignorance, if she is a farmer's daughter, for all I can see, these young women are just as chuck-full of common sense as my Kate. We don't usually expect it of city-bred girls." The young men looked at each other knowingly and smiled broadly, but said nothing.

"Bless my stars, here I stand talking and may be ye haven't had a bite of breakfast. Oh, ye have? well, then, we'll be off to the field; the boys have been gone an hour, and are well under way—I have only four hands now, and can't get on with less than six. My place is small but there's always a heap to do."

At the close of the day two very tired young men laved their burning hands and faces at the spring, where stood a bench with wash basins, and in a rude summer house hung a glass and brushes and combs, for the farm hands. Here they rested and cooled off while waiting the sound of the dinner horn, or the supper call, as the case might be.

"Well, Tom," said one of the "extra hands," "how's your pulse by this time?"

"By gosh, Jerry, I'm stiff in every joint; but it's a

jolly lark, nevertheless; I wonder when we'll catch a wink at those sensible city girls."

And the two excited boys waited impatiently for the horn, hoping the maids might be at the table, but the family ate at a private board and in another room, much to the chagrin and disappointment of the new hands.

As the boys sauntered out of doors to find a cool spot after the evening meal, one said unto the other. "Well, farm work does make a fellow ravenous, but I'll be switched if those men didn't act like wolves—no more politeness than a drum stick; I don't wonder the family, with their sensible visitors, eat at a separate table, if they are people of any refinement, and of course they are."

"Yes," replied the friend, "but it might have a very soothing effect on those wolfish creatures to have the ladies there to set a good example. It would have softened the two *tramps* anyway. But I heard a few snatches of the conversation in the next room, did you?"

"Indeed and I did; my ears were so strained for a familiar voice that I could scarcely taste my food."

"Ha! ha! you've got it bad, old fellow; but it's not strange—there! look! three little maids from school trudging down the pathway. *Ah!* put on the check rein, the curb bit, bear down on the brakes, or by Jove, I'll break loose, kick over the traces, or do something desperate, for that white-robed creature in the centre has started my blood all of a tingle," and the excited speaker turned resolutely away and stalked off madly in an opposite direction. Not so his companion. He deliberately walked in the direc-

tion of the little maids, and striding across the yard, reached the gate before the trio arrived. He there hesitated, not knowing whether to pass out, or heed his first impulse, which was to open the gate for the girls, and thereby secure a glimpse of Amy's sweet face, and perhaps a 'thank you.' His courage failed him as he heard their near approach, and just then glancing across the lot to where Jerry was halting and looking to see what was in the wind, he saw a motion of the head from that individual which surely meant disapproval of his action, and this determined him. So, in a somewhat awkward, manner he hurried on as though intent on some important errand, and the gate swung to with a clang just as the girls approached.

Tom felt that he had done a rude thing, and was berating himself soundly, and trying, as we all do under similar circumstances, to place the blame somewhere besides on our own shoulders, when, to add to his chagrin, he heard Amy's voice say in an undertone: "What a greeny! Any small boy ought to have more manners."

"What can you expect of a tramp?" said Kate. "Papa says he picked them up on the road, you know."

"Poor country bumpkin, he is to be pitied rather than censured," was gentle Margery's comment. "Why, Amy!" she continued, "he walks enough like Tom Walters to be the boy himself; now don't he?"

"Indeed he does! the very swing of the arms, and poise of the head," and she looked with tender interest at the "country bumpkin," who strode off as fast as his legs could carry him; and when out of sight of

the girls, who took an opposite direction and were hidden by the hillslope between them, he sat down upon a fallen log and wiped his perspiring face, not knowing whether to laugh at, or bewail his luck. Jerry came up, and seating himself said, "Well, you great galloot, what were you trying to do, spoil all our fun? You do act like an insane idiot sometimes, Tom."

"That's right, heap it up, pile it on, I'm meek enough just now to stand a scourging and not resent it."

"Oh, if that's your mood, or your dodge, I'll subside. Conscience sometimes is sharper than the rebuke of a friend."

"Yes, sharper than a serpent's tooth," quoted poor Tom. After a few moments' silence Jerry burst into a hearty laugh and kept it up so long that Tom finally said, "Awful funny, ain't it?" but in so lugubrious a tone that it only made his companion laugh the harder, for the situation had struck him as being so very ludicrous, and Tom *did* look so funny in those horrid big pants, and his ill-fitting blouse, and with that forlorn expression.

The young women had returned, and were entering the gate when this most familiar laugh reverberated through the air. Margery and Amy stopped stock still and looked at each other with questioning eyes. Then Margery's face turned a shade paler, for she was haunted by a superstitious fear. Might this not be some ghostly visitant? and she actually began to tremble.

Amy, divining her thoughts, laughed merrily, as she cried, "You big ninny! that was Jerry Stubleton's—

no, Jerry Heartwell's laugh, and no mistake: there's but one boy that can laugh with such utter abandon when he is particularly pleased; no wraith ever gave vent to such a substantial guffaw. *I am going to reconnoitre,*" and she started in the direction from whence came the sound of merriment.

"Talk about galloots," Tom was saying, "that laugh has been our undoing, I'll wager my new hat," and he took off his twenty-five cent broad-rimmed straw and twirled it around.

"By George!" and Jerry took off his own hat and clapped it over his face. "You're right. Mag never could mistake that laugh, and if she's within a mile of here, she heard it and is now searching for its owner."

"Then come along," urged Tom, "let's get out of sight," and the two new laborers hastened toward the house, hoping to get within its shelter before discovery.

Too late. Amy's blithe step had brought her to the hill top which commanded a view of the valley where the boys had been seated, and she saw the two figures hastening along as they made rapid tracks for the house. Amy turned to the other two girls and beckoned vociferously; they ran to her side, and as she pointed toward the escaping culprits, she and Margery both exclaimed, "It *is*, as true as the world!"

"Well! upon my word! what a lark!" cried Amy.

"What are you two girls raving about those nasty tramps for? Are they princes in disguise?" asked Kate, marvelling greatly.

"Yes, indeed they are," laughed the sweethearts, and then they revealed the situation.

"Let's go and find them," pleaded Amy, for the boys had disappeared behind the house.

"Oh, *no!*" the other two objected, "let us perfectly ignore them, just to see what their intentions are," and so it was agreed.

"I'll tell you, girls, *we* can have some rare sport. George Powell and Ned Brewster will come on horseback this evening—they always do—and I shall insist upon them going with you two to see that picturesque old ruin I told you about. They are capital-fellows, I've known them all my life—and it will make those tramps so jealous they will be sure to divulge their identity," said this diplomatic country maid.

"Capital!" cried Amy. "Poor Jerry!" cried Margery, "but I'll do it."

Less than an hour later, four jolly equestrians were cantering down the roadway. And out from the barn-door gleamed four hungry, wrathful eyes—*green?* I should say so.

Kate, as if by accident, happened along soon after, saying as she passed the two, swinging her little willow basket—"I usually take this time to gather the eggs."

"Allow us to assist you, Miss Truesdall." And the boys diligently, and most politely aided in the search, in the meantime striking up an acquaintance, by asking the young lady a few questions. Said the elder, "Are those your brothers, Miss Truesdall, who just passed down the road with two young women on horseback?"

"Oh, no: they are some dear friends of mine, fine young men, too; they are well off, and well educated,

though farmers' sons. They seem quite devoted to my friends," said the tantalizing girl.

"U—m, and how do your friends seem to be impressed?" continued the first speaker, whose face and voice betokened great interest in the subject.

"Oh, they quite enjoy their society; I am left out in the cold, as you see."

"Yes, not very polite visitors, I should judge," said the hitherto silent young man. "How often does this thing occur?" and he looked as though waiting a very important jury decision.

"Not oftener than the young ladies desire, I guess," was the non-committal reply.

Just here Farmer Truesdall came to the barn, and giving his daughter a very disapproving look and gesture, bade her "go and see if her mother needed her," then turning to his new hands said: "Well, boys, you have done a good day's work *for* green hands, and I hope you'll be on deck bright and early. We breakfast at five; you will sleep here in the barn; we have a room quite comfortable, that we always give our 'extras' when the house is full," and he led them to their sleeping quarters—a room in the barn loft, commodious enough, and with a bed supplied with a clean straw mattress and covering, two wooden chairs, and a stand on which a lantern lamp stood. A few pictures from *Harper's Weekly* were pasted on the board walls—showing that some of the former occupants were of an artistic turn. The boys expressed themselves as quite satisfied, and promised to be on hand early in the morning; after which the farmer departed, and they were left to themselves.

"Well," said Tom, dolefully, "can't you give us another outburst of merriment?"

"Thunder and lightening! No! I feel more like swearing. Humph! what flighty, flirty creatures girls are anyway."

"I've a good will to strike out for home," said Tom.

"*'Home?'* *'Strike out?'* not I, no-sir-ee! I'm going to stay for the farce—or maybe the tragedy will come last."

The two sat waiting and watching, growing more and more ill at ease until a merry laugh, which was joined by several others, came floating up the road.

With a sigh of pain and relief the elder said, "Well, I'm dead tired, and am going to bed. Come along, Tom, the girls know what they are about, and let's not make fools of ourselves." So to bed they went, but not to sleep. Their window faced the piazza of the farm house, and here in the moonlight a merry group were chatting and laughing until ten o'clock.

When the good-nights were uttered, and the clatter of hoofs was heard again, the unhappy tramps were about to close their eyes and ears, when a manly voice called out down the road.

"To-morrow evening—don't forget."

"We must disclose to-morrow, old boy. I can't stand this pressure much longer without damaging *something*."

Tom chuckled, but it was a weak, sickly attempt, and then tired nature gave way to sweet, balmy sleep.

The girls talked, and giggled and planned until the clock struck twelve, and Mr. Truesdall called out, "Come, come, that will do; let us have a little sleep, children," and quiet reigned at last.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

FOUR people in the farm house seemed suddenly to lose their appetites, for on the following morning, scarcely was the excellent breakfast partaken of, when four pairs of ears heard Farmer Truesdall's voice utter the following sentence as he arose from the table, "Wife, we will be very busy in the lower lot to-day; can you send our dinner? It will save time."

"Yes, father. If these girls can harness up the mare and take the buckboard, I'll send a nice warm dinner."

"Oh, how jolly!" exclaimed Amy.

"Splendid!" cried Margery.

"Lovely!" echoed Kate, "and oh, Muz, let us take ours along, too; there's a charming grove of trees in the north end of the lot; we'll take our books, and the hammocks, and just have a picnic!"

"How delightful!" chimed in the friends: and so it was decided; then, as usual, the whole family went to work to prepare a medley for the stomach and tired bodies, to add to the scene of pleasure (?) and excitement attendant on picnics.

How little we understand the meaning of true happiness. We cater to our material wants continually; ignoring the far more essential needs of the spirit; little realizing that our bodily sufferings all come from gratifying the senses.

At twelve o'clock the big clothes-basket was ready with its burden of edibles, and a smaller one, prepared with such dainties as tempt the palates of young love-

sick maids—delicate sandwiches, wee pickles, salads, mountain cake, chocolate caramels, and fried chicken.

The boys had been hurried off before catching a sight of the young women, but their hearts beat high with hope as the noon hour drew near. They found a spring near the "grove" in the north part of the lot (accidentally of course); here they bathed their hot and perspiring faces; washed their swollen red hands, and tried to look attractive; but alas! the effort was vain, and they compared themselves with the young men so neatly attired the night before.

The rest of the men gathered under a large tree nearer their labor, too tired to even care for cleanliness—having a supply of cold coffee for relieving their thirst. The two "extras" were reclining under a spreading maple as the young women drove into the lot. They went direct to the men, among whom was Mr. Truesdall, and had them remove the large basket then alighted, and with deft hands spread the cloth, and made everything ready for the tired and ravenous laborers. When all was in readiness, the farmer bade one of the men call to those "exclusive chaps," which brought a smile of derision to the faces of the workmen, and a smile of intelligence to the three girls.

Jerry and Tom, or as some might prefer, 'Tom and Jerry' obeyed the call, though somewhat reluctantly; for in spite of gnawing hunger, there was a keener longing for a look, a sound, or mayhap a touch of the beloved in store should they remain where they were.

The wagon containing the little maids and their lunch passed by the two young men, and although some keen glances were stolen, no recognition was

vouchsafed, and a merry laugh was indulged in by the girls as they prepared their dinner.

"Isn't it fun? I wonder how long the silly fellows will keep it up?" said Kate, who being only an on-looker, could fully enjoy, without experiencing any heart twinges.

The repast being heartily enjoyed and partaken of unsparingly, the trio proceeded to make themselves comfortable while waiting for the men to finish their dinner.

A loud cry of pain all at once jarred upon their ears: a cry scarcely human, so savage, and apparently so involuntary.

"Oh mercy! what is it?" and they waited—fearing they knew not what—until in a few moments Tom Walters and Mr. Truesdall came towards them leading or supporting poor Jerry, who had run upon a hornets' nest, and the more he tried to fight them off the more the infuriated creatures swarmed about him, until they covered his face and hands, making him mad with pain, and the yell he gave was the means of bringing to his assistance all the hands, and none too soon, for the poor boy was about ready to faint away. They all received some stings in battling for their comrade, but they were so concerned for him that they paid little heed to themselves.

Mr. Truesdall and Tom were hastening him to the spring, where a mud plaster was to be made, and the sufferer made ready to get home as fast as possible. His face and hands were swollen all out of shape, and the first thought of his sweetheart was that her lover had been bitten by a rattlesnake. All other thoughts gave way in presence of this terrible fear, and she ran

to him, threw her arms about him, crying, "Oh, my darling! what has happened?" and began to cry. Jerry tried to smile as he gave her an embrace, and said, "Nothing very serious, love; but, oh! it's mighty painful!"

Amy, too, was reckless and going up to her lover cried "Tom, dear, tell us quick what did they do to poor Jerry?"

"Stung him, poor boy!" and then he drew Amy to him and kissed her hand, just as Mr. Truesdall came up with a great ball of mud and bade Jerry lie down on his back for a few moments while he applied the paste to face and hands. But as he did so he beckoned Kate, and with a terrible frown said, "Who the devil are these fellows, anyway? I don't understand these young women, and if it's city fashion to hug and hang on to a pair of tramps as they were just doing, I'll pack them off home."

"O, father! It's a lark all through. These are the girls' city lovers, come out to surprise them, and now I guess the surprise is turned upon themselves," replied his daughter.

"O-ho! that's the way the wind blows. Well, I thought there was something queer about the chaps."

By this time they were all clustered about the afflicted Jerry, who looked for all the world like a well preserved mummy. When the pain subsided, Margery insisted upon, "her boy" getting into the hammock, where he found himself so comfortable after a while, that he refused to be hastened home, and preferred to stay and be talked to by the rest of the young people, who were only too glad to let their tongues loose; and soon the "lark" was explained to the satisfaction of

all; but the boys were very greatly chagrined to know they had been recognized, and that the flirtation with the country boys was all planned for their benefit.

It was four o'clock when the party surprised good Mrs. Truesdall by their unusual appearance and manner. She laughed as heartily as a girl when told of the escapade and its rather ridiculous ending, at the same time applying remedies to the face and hands of her poor "tramp," as "father" would insist upon calling him.

It was a week before Jerry was himself again, and not a day sooner would the good people consent to their departure. The boys donned their own clothes, which they had left in valises at the station, and surprised the country folks with their fine looks and manners.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"HOME Again, Home Again," sang the happy youths and maidens, as they clustered about the piano, and Tom's strong touch and rich voice, now so well trained, added zest to the heartfelt strains, on the evening of their return from their sylvan retreat. The elder people were for the first time made aware of the boys' escapade, and laughed heartily over the revelation.

"They don't run away from us again in such a fashion. Tom and I have made up our minds to suffer no more such humiliations as when seeing these witches go cantering off with two country clod-hoppers," said Jerry in mock anger.

"Humiliation," cried Amy, "that's a new word for jealousy, eh, Margery?"

"Never mind what it is. What is the use in our putting off our trip abroad for a century or two, why not go this fall?" continued Jerry.

"O—h! how absurd! Why we must have a *year* for preparations, must we not, Margery dear?" quoth Amy.

"Not I, love; I could be ready in two months," said honest and practical Margery.

"Let me decide, my children," said Mr. Heartwell, who had been an interested listener. "I propose that you set the time for the first of June next; a charming month at home or abroad, and you can have the winter for your preparations. How does it suit you all?"

Jerry groaned aloud, but the others decided it was the best possible arrangement, and thus *that* question was settled. "'Twas ever thus from childhood's hour," quoted Jerry, trying hard to look as though he meant it, but ending in a merry laugh as the others cried "for shame!"

CHAPTER XL.

WHAT a busy, happy winter that was. How the girls, Margery and Amy, haunted the dry goods counters. How the seamstresses worked and tried to please the "giddy young things," as their elders were wont to call them; and the dressmakers were put to their wit's end to "design something unlike any one's else ever thought of," so Amy demanded. Not so her friend. Margery, so long unaccustomed to grandeur, thought everything her auntie suggested, just as it should be, and was supremely happy, asking only that Jerry be pleased with her selections, for "I am hereafter to dress for *his* eyes, what others think does not matter," she would say.

"Well, *I* propose to please myself, and if Mr. Tom is not satisfied, he can look the other way," was Amy's arch reply; well she knew Tom was always satisfied, by the compliments he so profusely lavished upon her.

The first of June came in with rosy blushes, and seemed so full of laughing sunshine and happy bird songs, that the two charming brides and their proud protectors felt, as they were pronounced "man and wife" before the multitude of upraised faces invited to witness the double marriage ceremony in Grace Church, that heaven indeed was blessing their union.

The reception over, the bridal couples prepared for the long-talked-of voyage across old ocean. The Doc-

tor and Linnet also were to be of the party. "The giddy young things absolutely *must* have a chaperon," said matronly Linnet.

"God bring you safe home again, my children," were Mr. Heartwell's last words as the group stood on the wharf ready for departure.

Jerry said in a low tone intended only for his mother's ear: "I shall not forget your parting advice, dear mother; my last evening at home was a precious one, and I kept thinking all night of our quiet talk, so like the days of old."

She pressed him close to her heart, but no sound came from her trembling lips. He understood, and giving her an affectionate embrace, hurried on board the steamer, where six happy faces, despite the tears and sadness of parting, gazed lovingly at the trio on shore, beyond whom stood another trio, too regardful of the feelings of their friends at such a time to join them. This trio was the Italian, Dick, and Jimmy, come to wish the voyagers "God-speed."

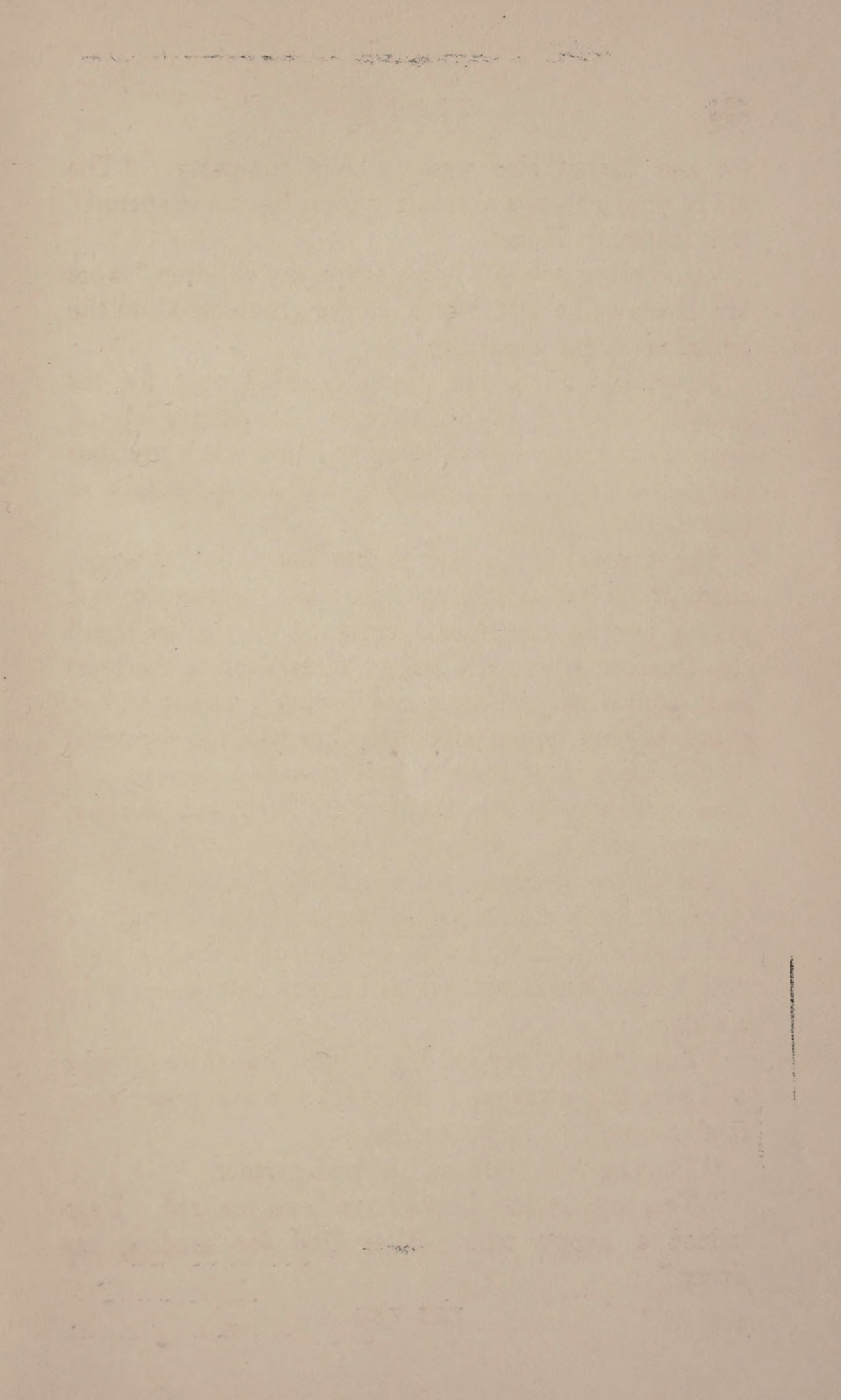
Let us, too, dear reader, wish them *bon voyage*.

"I declare! the house is as desolate as though we had had a double funeral, instead of a double wedding," said Mr. Heartwell, as he sank into a seat with a sigh.

"Yes, indeed," replied his sister, "but three months will soon slip away, and then with the four under your roof you will be in your element."

"That he will," echoed his fond partner.

"Yes, my fondest hopes have been realized. I am indeed a happy man. Bless God for sending me Jerry."



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